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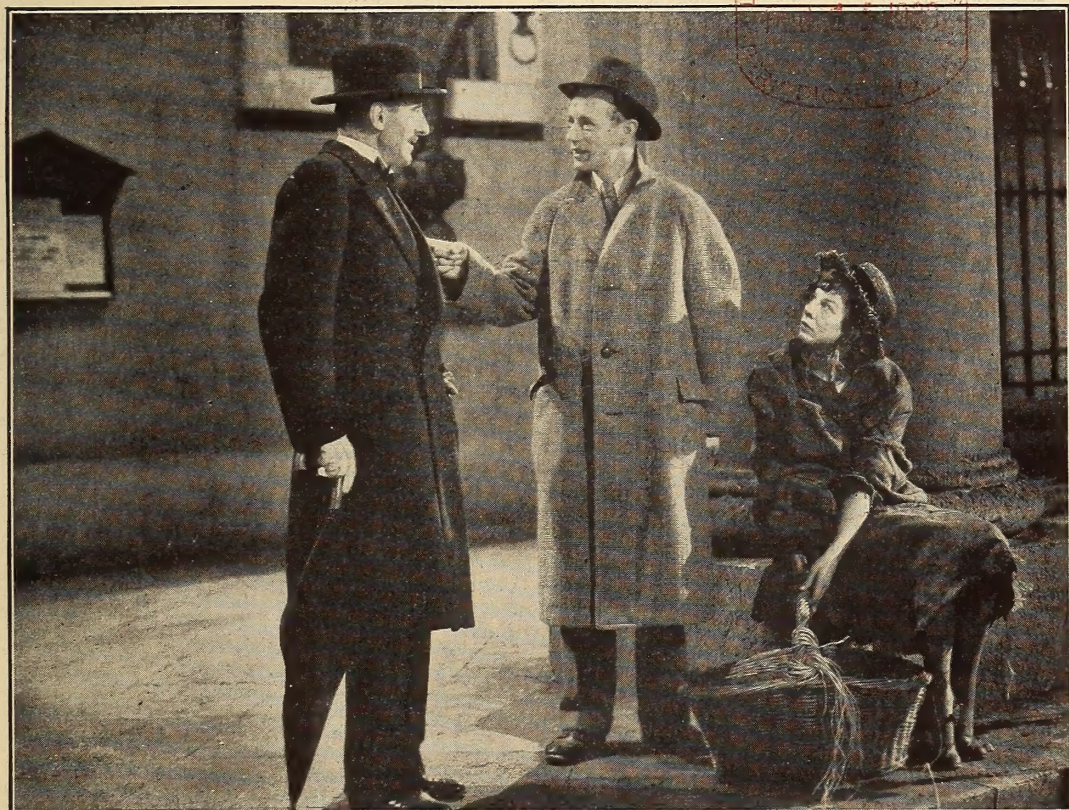
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Wendy Hiller, Leslie Howard and Scott Sunderland in "Pygmalion" (see page 14)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f ARIZONA WILDCAT—Jane Withers, Leo Carrillo. From an original idea by Frances Hyland and Albert Ray. Directed by Herbert I. Leeds. An amusing Western with Jane Withers giving valuable aid in rounding up the bandits and murderers. Has plenty of enjoyable action. 20th Century-Fox.

f BALDEVINS BROLLOP (Baldevin's Wedding)—Edvard Persson. Based on play by Wilhelm Krag. Directed by Emil A. Pehrson. A most enjoyable picture with plenty of first-rate comedy. The story of a tramp who is turned into a sea captain through marriage with a rich widow. Suffers from loose plot development and bad English titles, but story, acting and fine land and sea scapes definitely outweigh its defects. Instructive Swedish background. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.

fj CHRISTMAS CAROL, A—Reginald Owen, Terry Kilburn, Gene Lockart. Novel by Charles Dickens. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Dickens' Christmas classic, of the reformation of the old miser Scrooge. Metro Goldwyn-Mayer.

m COMET OVER BROADWAY—Kay Francis, Ian Hunter, John Litel. Based on novel by Faith Baldwin. Directed by Busby Berkeley. A woman achieves a great success as an actress, to get money to free her husband from prison, then gives up love to go back to him. A theatrically motivated story for Kay Francis admirers. First National.

f *DAWN PATROL, THE—Errol Flynn, David Niven, Basil Rathbone. Original screen story by John Monk Saunders. Directed by Edmund Goulding. A stirring and moving picture of life in the English flying forces

in France in the Great War. The emphasis is put strongly on the uselessness of such human sacrifice as the film shows. Warner Bros.

f DESTINO DI DONNA (Woman's Destiny)—Nino Besozzi. Story by Mario Camerini. Directed by Guido Brignone. The story of a girl abandoned by her lover and the problems that face her when she meets life with her child. Nothing new about the story, but the background of the girl's work and struggles is well done and convincing. Suggested for Italian audiences. Roma Films.

f DRAMATIC SCHOOL—Luise Rainer, Paul-ette Goddard, Alan Marshall. Hungarian play "School of Drama" by Hans Szekeley and Zoltan Egyed. Directed by Robert B. Sinclair. The story of a girl, intensely determined to be an actress, in the Paris national dramatic school, and how through suffering she attained success. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f *DUKE OF WEST POINT, THE—Louis Hayward, Joan Fontaine. Original screen story by George Bruce. Directed by Alfred E. Green. For those who relish the honor and glory of West Point here is the perfect picture. The story of an unlicked cub and his trials and tribulations as a cadet is told with a great deal of humor against a serious background of tradition and military discipline. Should be extremely popular with the family. United Artists.

f FRAM FOR FRAMGANG (Road to Success)—Jussi Björling. Manuscript and direction by Gunnar Skoglund. The story of a young tenor trying to break into radio, and how a young playwright and a young actress contrived a sensational debut for him. Pleasant entertainment, and splendid singing by a coming great tenor. There are English subtitles, though the dialogue is all in Swedish. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.

fj FRONTIERSMEN, THE—William Boyd. Based on story by Clarence E. Mulford. Directed by Lesley Selander. A good western with Hop-a-long Cassidy and his two cronies all vying for the love of the pretty school mistress. Excellent riding and the children are all very good. Paramount.

f GIRL DOWNSTAIRS, THE — Franciska Gaal, Franchot Tone. Story by Sandor Hunyady. Directed by Norman Taurog. A light and amusing story of a wealthy young man, who, having difficulties with his sweetheart's father, poses as a chauffeur to gain entrance into her house and engages a scullery maid to help him. In the end he falls in love with the maid. Well acted and directed. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

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National Board of Review Conference Program

The Conference of the National Board of Review to be held next month, February 2nd to 4th, in New York City offers an especially interesting and varied program.

We hope that many readers of our Magazine are going to be able to attend, and for their information we give here some of the details of program and plans.

The Conference opens on Thursday morning, February 2nd, with a special session on the subject of "Television Today" in New York City's radio station WNYC. This session will be addressed by Stanton Griffis, Chairman of the Executive Board of Paramount Pictures, Inc., and Allen B. Dumont, of the Allen B. Dumont Laboratories, talking on "Technical Aspects of Television" and "Television—the Unknown Quantity". Following the addresses there will be a conducted tour of the station.

The first session on the topic "The Making of a Motion Picture" will be held Thursday afternoon at the Hotel Pennsylvania. The various phases of motion picture production to be treated that afternoon are "The Making of a Scenario," "The Research Worker's Job," "The Problem of Casting," "The Designing of Costumes," "Music in the Motion Picture."

Thursday evening the Conference delegates will be guests of the Motion Picture Appreciation course conducted under the joint auspices of the School of Education of New York University and the National Board. The topic of that evening is "The Centenary of Photography" and the speaker is Therese Bonney. There will be an exhibi-

tion of Lumiere relics and showing of special French films.

Friday morning the Conference delegates will have opportunity to take part in a panel session on the subject of "Community Motion Picture Activities." This session meets at 10 o'clock at the Pennsylvania.

The second part of the topic "The Making of a Motion Picture" will be presented Friday afternoon at 2:30 under the following titles: "The Director's Work," "Camera-work and Lighting," "Sound in the Motion Picture," "The Actor's Angle," "Montage and Editing." Among those who will speak at the sessions on "The Making of a Motion Picture" are: Dudley Nichols, President Screen Writers' Guild, winner of the Academy Award for his adaptation of *The Informer*, author of the screenplay for *Hurricane* and many other films; Ladislaus Czettel, Costume designer for the new MGM picture "Pygmalion" and the Reinhardt productions at the Salzburg Festivals; David Mendoza, Nine years Musical Director of the Capitol Theatre, New York, scored and presented: *The Big Parade*, *Ben Hur*, *White Shadows of the South Seas*; Marion Robertson, Eastern Talent Scout for RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.; Reeve O. Strock, Sound Director, Eastern Service Studios; and the popular star Franchot Tone.

Friday evening there will be a special film showing.

Saturday morning the Conference delegates will have brought to them the work of the Junior 4-Star Clubs with the reporting by Club advisors and juniors and the show-

(Continued on page 23)

"A Director at Work"

By JOHN BRAHM

From a radio address delivered under the auspices of The National Board of Review over Station WNYC on October 20th, 1938. Mr. Brahm is known as the director of "Broken Blossoms" (English version), "Penitentiary" and the recently released "Girls' School".

WHEN I directed my first film *Broken Blossoms* a few years ago in England I approached the work with a good deal of uncertainty as to how I should make out. Not only was I to direct a modern version of a famous silent picture, but also I had to make myself at home in an entirely new medium. I had never before studied the technique of the movie from inside a studio. In twenty years as a stage producer in Vienna I never thought I would ever direct films.

Still, as an interested member of the movie audience I had been familiar with motion pictures for a long time. Even in the days when the Germans were making their most important silent films I was greatly interested in American productions. The German films, for all their importance, seemed to me too ponderous; too weighed down with their content and attempts to put something across. Whereas the American silent films had nothing of that: I admired from the first the fact that no matter how important or dramatic their subject, they never forgot to give it great entertainment value as well. Then, of course, there was the additional advantage of the skill with which they were put together and stripped of all superfluous material.

On the whole, perhaps, I am one of those people who feel that the silent films were the best—what the highbrow fans would call "the purest cinema." But I think the basis of the movie is the same today: you simply cannot get away from the fact that pictures, and not words or sounds, are the basis of the film. Sound and speech have simply added another element that can be of great assistance to the director. We find a rather similar use in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—there, in his last movement, he decided that musical instruments were inadequate to his purpose and suddenly introduced the

human voice. This, I feel, should be the attitude of the film director; he should look upon speech as something to be introduced only when the technique of the camera is inadequate.

Sometimes I have whole sequences in my films where there is no dialog at all. There is enough visual attraction for the audience to make words unnecessary. But if a director is going to work on this principle he must plan his action and continuity with the greatest care. I am not one of those directors who do very little planning before they shoot—who prefer to wait until the moment comes and then rely upon instinct or inspiration, or whatever you like to call it, to tell them what to do. I like to follow a blueprint all the way.

This method was more or less forced on me when I made my first picture *Broken Blossoms*. As I have told you, I knew nothing about camera work, or how to set about making a picture, but I had orders to make one! So I sat up night after night with the script girl, trying to get in advance a clear conception of what was to be done and to visualize everything down to the last detail. Since then I have found this method good for other reasons as well. It makes the work go much more smoothly for everybody. When your sets are all down on paper—everything from camera angles to dialog—there's no argument about anything. Both actors and director feel they are simply following a fixed plan: each scene has been worked out in relation to the type of characters and the mood of the moment, and to improvise would not only seem unnatural but would throw everything out of line.

I don't want you to think that so much careful preparation means that the actors are strictly controlled; trained in every movement and inflection. I am very much opposed to that kind of dictatorial behavior. Nothing is worse for an actor than to feel that his director is his boss. However careful I may be about plans and details, I never forget that my actors must be feeling comfortable and confident. So I try to be as

casual as possible with them, and to give the impression that what is coming is something quite straightforward and simple; that there is no cause for worry either for them or for me. If they feel that I am nervous and tense they will soon begin to feel the same way and all their naturalness will go.

Of course the director must make it his job to see that everything that stands in the way of natural acting is eliminated. For instance, you often find that actors see the script for the first time when they go onto the set. This is not my way. I let them get on good terms with the script and rehearse them thoroughly well in advance. A clear conception of character and mood is essential to the actor as well as to the director. And for the same reason I am very careful about my sets. A set must always inspire the right mood both in me and in my players. If the scene is an intimate one, the set must give a feeling of intimacy by itself. The actors must feel its intimacy as soon as they walk on. Then all they have to do is behave naturally—just as they would in their own living-room, kitchen, garden, or wherever it is. This makes it all sound very easy, I know, but that is the feeling I try to arouse in the actors.

You have probably heard people say that the camera is really the eyes of the audience, following everything that needs to be seen, nearer or farther from what it is looking at according to the dramatic or narrative emphasis the director is looking for. Naturally this makes it difficult for the actors not to be conscious of the camera. Everything must be done in relation to the camera, and yet as if the camera were not there. The camera should help to bring into harmony all the important elements—rhythm, timing, mood, characters—and it should be made to do so in the most economical manner possible. Otherwise the audience, without knowing why, will feel dissatisfied with the picture and may, quite wrongly, blame the story or the actors, when actually it is simply the wrong treatment of the film as an entity that has made it unconvincing. Technique always gets in the way—you have to have the camera, but it is a terrible nuisance and must be used so no one is conscious of it; just as in listening to music

you simply hear the music without being aware of the instrument behind.

Apart from careful rehearsing and plenty of tact the important thing is to have the sets and props so arranged that what the actor *has* to do is about the only thing he *can* do. Arrange things in such a way that it is almost impossible for him to step out of the camera line or make other obvious mistakes. As a result the actors won't have to work hard to obey directions; everything will come naturally from within them, and the more perfectly played a scene is, the more they will think that they are entirely responsible for it. But since I have spent the greater part of my life dealing with human beings on the stage, I feel I can claim a good deal of the credit when things run smoothly. My experience has helped me tremendously in developing a certain sense of showmanship and dramatic value, as well as in handling actors. The result is that harmony between the human and technical elements is made much simpler.

I would also like to say a word or two about the part played by costumes in these matters. Hollywood is one of the fashion centers of the world, and consequently, every now and then, its actresses feel that they can't afford to look natural on the screen. So I make a point of supervising the costume work and the work of the hairdresser, to make sure that a simple personality is not made too glamorous—or vice versa. This is very important, because nothing is more ruinous to the mood of a scene than a costume or coiffeur that is not in keeping with the character who wears it. I always insist on my own way in such matters—let the geese look like geese and not artificial swans.

One point I would like to mention is one that is worrying for every director with initiative. When I was a stage producer in Vienna I produced every sort and kind of show, from classics to the French farce. But in Hollywood most film executives seem to think that if you make a good job of a murder story you must go on committing murder all your life. This is understandable in a way, because if they see that you bring in money with a certain type of story, why should they risk letting you try something

quite different? I have been lucky in this respect; I have been fairly successful with different kinds of films, but before I was allowed to make *Girls' School* I had to submit to a test, just as actors have to go through a test for a part. Although some directors may welcome it, I am strongly against limiting directors too strictly, because I believe more in the way in which things are done than in the subject matter itself.

Sometimes you will find, of course, that repetition of individuality is more tiresome than repetition of story. It seems to make all the stories look alike, no matter how different they may be in plot and content. But that is because the director is trying to make a picture about himself, instead of about the people in the story.

As a director I, personally, find Hollywood exactly the right atmosphere for film-

making. But there is one point I'd like to bring up—one which I feel is a serious point of consideration. I believe the Hollywood companies keep their directors, producers and executives down there for over-long periods. Hollywood is a good place to be in, but it should not become a rut. A director should not go for long stretches, as is sometimes the case, hardly ever seeing things and people outside the studios. If a person is to keep his mind fresh and receptive to the affairs of everyday life he should get away regularly and come in contact with the world. Otherwise he gets rusty, not only in regard to the very important things in life, but over small, daily matters in the business of living, and over the thousands of jobs and occupations that occupy the minds of people who are not living and breathing motion pictures all the time.

The Foreign Film and Hollywood

This is the summary of a radio discussion presented under the auspices of the National Board over New York City's Station WNYC. In it, Mr. Jean Lenauer, Director of the Filmarte Theatre in New York City, replied to questions by Mr. Frank S. Nugent, Film Editor of the New York Times.

THIS is a specially apt time to make a few comments on the position of the foreign film in relation to Hollywood. Not since the pre-talkie days has interest in foreign productions been so great. Last year the New York Times reviewed about six hundred pictures: two hundred and fifty of them came from abroad. The New York Film Critics' prize for the best foreign film has gone to France for two straight years: the 1936 prize-winner was "Carnival in Flanders" and the winner last year was "Mayerling". Both had their premieres at the Filmarte Theatre in New York.

Recently there has been a good deal of controversy about foreign films versus Hollywood. When Sam Goldwyn returned

from Europe last year, he said: "The crisis for the American picture is here. Foreign studios threaten the supremacy of Hollywood. . . ." Now Mr. Goldwyn is a man of great prominence in the movie world, and as a precautionary measure I don't think I should disagree with him. At the same time I do not believe that Hollywood needs to fear foreign producers—not even the French, who have made great strides in the last few years. I question whether the average American is interested in foreign films. I still feel their appeal is limited.

When I say limited I don't mean limited to those who understand the language. I mean limited to those looking for the unusual; to those who will go off the beaten track for their entertainment. And I am not referring here to the so-called intellectuals. The people who go to foreign films are not "arty", they are entertainment buyers. They want their money's worth. The proof of this is the fact that mediocre for-

foreign films usually fail miserably in this country.

I am sure there are people who would question strongly my contention that the appeal of the foreign film is limited. They would point to *Carnival in Flanders*, for instance, as an example of a foreign film which was put into the RKO circuit. But they would not know that this film remained little more than one day in the RKO theatres and was then withdrawn—despite the fact that it had run for fourteen weeks at the Filmarte. It is true that it played at several other theatres afterwards, but in Boston, for example, it was held for only three weeks, while an English-speaking film, *Moonlight Sonata*, was breaking records up there with a run of five months! And this despite the fact that *Moonlight Sonata* did not receive particularly good reviews.

One can only explain such things by saying that it all boils down to the question of public taste. I think the average movie-goer is scared of a French picture—of any foreign picture. Once you get him over that mental handicap he is likely to do what some people did at the Filmarte when *Carnival* was running—come back ten and twelve times! Of course, this is an exceptional case and the only other foreign picture with a comparable record is *Mayerling*. Yet the receipts drawn by *Mayerling* from all over the country would be considered insignificant as against the box-office returns of a picture like *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.

Taking all in all, however, I don't think people are as scared of foreign-language films as they were a few years ago. There is not the same prejudice, and I think *Mayerling* has been a great factor in reducing it. Not because the public overcame their prejudice suddenly, but because Charles Boyer was in it and he is a star who has become quite well-known to American audiences through his work in Hollywood. Because of Boyer, many people went to see it under the impression that it was an American film. Most of them liked it. But I am sure they would never have ventured in had they known the film was in French with English subtitles.

Here, I think, lies the solution for overcoming the hazard of a foreign language. It

is a solution that lies not in the language but in the stars. This sounds as though I meant to cast a horoscope, but the stars I mean are strictly earthbound. We must realize that American pictures are popular in France largely because the American film stars are so well known there. Garbo, Crawford and Cooper are as widely-publicized in France as they are here, and are just as popular as the home talent. The same would be true in this country if French stars were publicized on a wide scale.

Let me add quickly that I am not proposing that the French bombard us with ballyhoo about their Shirley Temples and Clark Gables! That would be like bringing nuts to Brazil. All I mean is that American audiences would be, not more receptive to, but more eager to meet foreign films if they knew a little more about the players.

Of course if you go through a list of French stars you will find a number besides Boyer, who are quite well-known over here. There is Danielle Darrieux, Annabella, Fernand Gravet, Simone Simon, Hedy Lamarr and one or two others. But their names are known only because they have worked in Hollywood: none of them was widely known to the general audience before, even though they all had appeared in several foreign pictures. In fact, one of the very few French actors who has a reputation here although he has never been to this country, is Harry Baur. He is the notable exception to the rule.

In France the whole publicity set-up is very different to what it is here. French stars are not ballyhooed nearly as much as Hollywood players are for the reason that a French star is never signed for long terms. He is signed for just one picture. When that is completed he has to sign a new contract—usually with a new producer. Consequently no star receives the extensive publicity build-up the Hollywood glamour boy or girl gets. This, in turn, cuts down the fan-public tremendously. I'd say that for every ten thousand American fans there are ten French! And, incidentally, a French star's private life is *private*. There's none of this petty gossip about who has who's little golden key. . . . And another thing that would seem strange here is the fact that

in France directors are as popular as stars. Men like Renoir, Duvivier and Guitry get equal billing with the players. Their names mean something at the box-office.

There are other, more fundamental differences I should like to mention. I have already noted that Harry Baur is about the only French star outside Hollywood who is known for his French record. This may strike you as strange, since Baur is a character actor, not a romantic type at all. But in France the public doesn't insist on having romantic stars. Or, at least, it doesn't see why middle-aged men and women are necessarily unromantic. If France doesn't actually practice the doctrine "Life Begins at Forty", at least it pretends that life doesn't end at 25—as one is led to believe by Hollywood. A glance at a list of France's most noted stars will show you this: Raimu, Françoise Rosay, Jean Gabin, Louis Jouvet, Sacha Guitry, Eric von Stroheim (we count him a French star now—after Hollywood is through with him)—all these are well out of the juvenile class. I remember when *Carnival in Flanders* was shown to a group of film executives at a preview in New York. They thought it was a good picture, but said it wouldn't attract a corporal's guard in this country. There were no young people in it—not in the major roles, anyway. The executives were amazed that the romantic lead should be given to a matron like Françoise Rosay.

But let us return to our original point, the question of the popularity of foreign films. Can we say that they will ever again be as popular as they were before the talkies—when an actor could be equally eloquent, without saying a word, in German, French, Italian and English?

Personally, for all their increasing popularity, I don't believe foreign pictures could ever have the appeal of the Hollywood product. And there is more to this than the mere language question. Hollywood deliberately sets out to make pictures of broad general appeal; films that are calculated to be as entertaining in Timbuctoo as they are in Hoboken. But in France, for example, a picture is made for the French. If it happens to please an English, French, Italian or American movie-goer, it is purely an ac-

cident—an unintentionally lucky thing for the producer.

Naturally this raises the question of which method is the right one? Should Hollywood, for example, set out to make pictures for Americans only? From the economic view there is something to be said for this. Pictures could be made more cheaply if they were intended for the domestic market. In most cases Hollywood producers work with one eye on home and the other abroad. In order to recover the money spent on a film like *Marie Antoinette* it is necessary to draw large revenues from foreign countries. In a sense a limited budget is desirable. No money can be wasted, so the producer is forced to substitute ingenuity and talent.

I am not suggesting, of course, that a low production budget invariably brings out the best in a producer. But I do know that mere expensiveness is no guarantee of a picture's quality. Despite the belief in Hollywood that American pictures must sell the world, I do want to point out that there is no real necessity for this. There are two methods of producing. One is to produce expensively and get the greatest possible return from a world market. The other is to produce cheaply for a certain proportion of the population. By the latter method I don't mean production for a minority, but simply that you can't expect a picture to appeal to every age and nationality. The rare exceptions like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* do not in any way disprove this point.

Of course Hollywood has had far more success in the world market than any other country. Foreign producers have tried to imitate their success and the result has been a sad one. They hadn't Hollywood's technical resources, and, in addition, commercialization robbed them of their best attribute—freshness.

All these factors lead me to believe that Hollywood has little to fear from foreign-language producers. This despite the fact that when I circulated a questionnaire at the Filmarte, my audience replied unanimously that knowledge of language was not essential to the enjoyment of a picture. This was borne out by the fact that only 15 per cent of them knew French and about 10 per cent

were slightly acquainted with it. I naturally believe that if there is an increase in good pictures from abroad the audience interest in them will increase. Already there are two hundred foreign film theatres in the United States, and while I believe these will never provoke serious competition with Hollywood for reasons of popular taste, I do think that Hollywood can profit by whatever competition is given it by foreign producers. Foreign films contain many new ideas, suggest new treatments, frequently provide new story material. *Algiers*, for example, was made from a French film *Pepe le Moko*, although I think it differed considerably from the original.

People often ask me which I think are best: American or foreign productions. Again this is a question to which one cannot give a fair answer at all; it is entirely a matter of personal taste. I do think that to get over in this country a foreign language film has to be specially good, since much of the flavor of the dialog is bound to be lost on American audiences. But in time I believe American audiences could grow to have as keen an appreciation of foreign language films as the audiences in other countries have now.

There is just one more point I would like to bring up in relation to foreign and Hollywood productions. You may have noticed that censorship of the foreign film (on its arrival here) is more stringent than censorship of the domestic. Apparently there is a different code of morals here and abroad, and the foreign film takes on a sinister implication when it crosses the Atlantic. Of course, I am opposed to censorship in any form, but strict censorship of foreign films strikes me as even more unfortunate, since it is taken for granted that every country has its own ethics. Why censor a film that originated abroad and is spoken in a foreign language? Besides, foreign films appeal to mature people. Children rarely, if ever, attend them. They would not understand them. The censors should be more liberal with foreign films, but actually they are not. They fail to take into consideration the fact that they are judging the work of people who have no conception of what Americans consider proper and improper.

Films and Education

"The Motion Picture as an Educational Medium" forms the subject matter of the Journal of Educational Sociology for November. The half dozen articles making up the issue are bound to be of interest to teachers and students interested in the growth of the motion picture as an educational medium. Very fortunately the day is passing when such educational studies were written without feeling or interest in the subject matter, and to read them required determination and industry. Now, subject matter must be handled with interest and economy, and it is to the credit of this Journal that all six of its present articles have entertainment, as well as educational value.

One of the most interesting contributions is "The Motion Picture Program and Policy of the United States Government" by Fanning Hearon, writing as director of the Motion Picture Division of the Department of the Interior. It is a summary of Washington production covering the various motion picture departments and describing the type of pictures produced by each one of them. The Department of Agriculture, with such pictures as *The River* and *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, is familiar to us all, but it will be news to many of us to hear of such lesser known producers as the Department of Interior and the Signal Corps of the War Department.

Other contributions include a discussion of pedagogy and Hollywood: an appreciative summary of the results of *The Birth of a Baby* film controversy; and a study of recent developments in the educational film field. Also two departures from the home field in the form of an intelligent explanation of the possibilities of teaching French with films, and an interesting description of the progress in the use of educational films in Great Britain. There are also book reviews, covering selected material relative to the movies published in the past year. This issue is edited by Dr. Fred-eric M. Thrasher and published at 26 Washington Place, N. Y., Price \$35.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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FRANK WARD

The Year's Best

EVERYBODY'S choice of "best" is apt to simmer down to what one likes best. The National Board's annual selections give every taste a chance to function. The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is looking principally for whatever furthers the motion picture as a medium of artistic expression, whether it adds something technically to the movie art, extends the boundaries of that art as a picture of life, or presents something distinguished within the limits the movie has previously reached. For this reason the most emphasis is given to the selections of this committee, since they are more apt to hold up as a record of what the year has accomplished in the slow evolution of the cinema, and provide a list for people in the future to consult when they want to know about, or revive, the important films of 1938. The large Review Committee, on the other hand, is not looking so much for artistic merit and importance. It is merely registering, as a part of the public, what it likes, and its selections, like those of the Young Reviewers, are likely to coincide fairly closely with a list of the biggest box-office successes of the same period. Some of these very popular films are quickly forgotten, enjoyable as they are when they are new: less popular films are often the ones that are best remembered, and continue enjoyable as long as the prints of them survive.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays has again chosen what it considers the best film it has seen during the year, no matter where made, and this year that choice

was GRAND ILLUSION, made in France. This year the committee, instead of making a purely American list, considered together all films in which English was the language spoken, feeling justified in this change by the obvious fact that American and English films, working so closely together in material, personnel and all the elements of film-making, have become so essentially indistinguishable from each other that the geographical location of the studios in which they were made does not matter. Of English-speaking films the Committee considered THE CITADEL the best, and the total list of ten is as follows, in the order in which they were ranked:

1. The Citadel
2. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
3. The Beachcomber
4. To the Victor
5. Sing You Sinners
6. The Edge of the World
7. Of Human Hearts
8. Jezebel
9. South Riding
10. Three Comrades

THE CITADEL, adapted from A. J. Cronin's novel, made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in their English studio, was directed by King Vidor and had Robert Donat, Ralph Richardson and Rosalind Russell for its principal actors. It treated a serious subject, that of the humanitarian practice of medicine, with sympathy and vividness. Its importance lies in this: that while it satisfies the critical it also entertains and educates the uncritical, educates them in a subtle way,



From "The Citadel" chosen by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays as the best English speaking film of 1938

enlarging their knowledge and thinking about real things and issues, and setting for them a higher standard, of which they may be unconscious but which may nevertheless be permanent and effective, of what to enjoy in movies.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS, Walt Disney's first feature-length picture, for which cartoon is an inadequate name. It has already charmed and delighted most of the modern world. It has opened up a new path in movie-making, which so far only Disney himself seems able to follow. A unique film, of perhaps incalculable influence, but an influence still all in the future.

THE BEACHCOMBER, made in England from a Somerset Maugham story, directed by Erich Pommer with Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester at the head of an excellent cast of actors. Comic and satirical, it manages to probe deftly and

deeply into some of the best known of the so-called human vices and virtues.

TO THE VICTOR. A fresh and refreshing pictorial dramatization of Alfred Olliphant's dog story, "Bob, Son of Battle", directed by Robert Stevenson, and containing among its many racy types a superb performance by Will Fyffe of a wily old rogue of a shepherd.

SING YOU SINNERS. Directed by Wesley Ruggles, from an original story by Claude Binyon, with a cast splendidly headed by Bing Crosby, this Paramount film belongs securely in the small category of choicer Americana. Unpretentious but remarkably skilfull in all its elements, it is a warm and vivid picture of American family life as it is lived.

THE EDGE OF THE WORLD. Made on a small island off the coast of Scotland by Michael Powell, this is a half-documentary record of the vanishing of a primi-

tive people in the face of encroaching modernity. It is a worthy companion to the Robert Flaherty films like *Man of Aran*.

OF HUMAN HEARTS. Made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer from Honoré Morrow's story, "Benefits Forgot", directed by Clarence Brown with actors like Walter Huston, Beulah Bondi and James Stewart in memorable performances. A story of Civil War days, and the quickly increasing distance already growing between generations, this is essentially the eternal problem of a boy and his parents, and the simple but often tragic conflicts that happen in a loving family.

JEZEBEL. A story of the old South, made by Warner Brothers and directed by William Wyler from a play by Owen Davis. A powerful study of a certain type of feminine character determined by her tradition, environment and inner nature, magnificently played by Bette Davis.

SOUTH RIDING. Another English film, made from Winifred Holtby's novel by Victor Saville. A story of the changing rural life in England, and how the lives of the townspeople and the town itself interact upon one another. Richly human, and acted by a splendid company.

THREE COMRADES. This Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer dramatization of Erich Remarque's novel of Germany just after the war, directed by Frank Borzage, is a tender and searching story of a little group of human beings trying to save their bits of personal life against the inhuman mass results of hatred and war. In it is one of the most beautiful performances of this or any other year by Margaret Sullavan.

GRAND ILLUSION, made in France by Jean Renoir, and voted the best of all the pictures of the year, is a story of French and German soldiers during the war, most of its action concerning French prisoners of war in a German prison camp, and the Germans in charge of them; the escape of two of the prisoners, their brief stay in the house of a German peasant woman near the border, and their eventual arrival in a neutral country. An entirely unconventional film, deep and searching in its humanity. For some it seems to be an anti-war film, but it is not so much anti-anything as it is a pro-

foundly sympathetic and understanding searching into human beings, as determined by the interaction of social forces and their individual selves.

Five other foreign-language films were chosen for outstanding values. *Ballerina*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, *Generals without Buttons*, *Peter the First* and *Professor Mamlock*.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays considers the following screen performances worthy of special praise. These preferences are listed alphabetically.

Lew Ayres in *Holiday* and *Young Dr. Kil-dare*

Pierre Blanchar, Harry Baur, Louis Jouvet and Raimu in *Un Carnet de Bal*

James Cagney in *Angels With Dirty Faces*

Joseph Calleia in *Algiers*

Chico in *The Adventures of Chico*

Robert Donat in *The Citadel*

Will Fyffe in *To the Victor*

Pierre Fresnay, Jean Gabin, Dita Parlo and

Eric von Stroheim in *Grand Illusion*

John Garfield in *Four Daughters*

Wendy Hiller in *Pygmalion*

Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester in *The Beachcomber*

Robert Morley in *Marie Antoinette*

Ralph Richardson in *South Riding* and *The Citadel*

Margaret Sullavan in *Three Comrades*

Spencer Tracy in *Boys Town*

On the basis of popular appeal the Review Committees of the National Board chose the following in the order of preference:

1. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
2. The Citadel
3. You Can't Take It With You
4. Boys Town
5. Marie Antoinette
6. Alexander's Ragtime Band
7. The Adventures of Robin Hood
8. Algiers
9. In Old Chicago
10. Four Daughters

The nation-wide 4-Star Clubs, which are the junior groups of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, made the following selection of the ten best pictures of 1938. These boys and girls, ranging in age from 9 to 17, make their selections in advance of any published lists made by older

groups or critics so that there can be no question of their being influenced by older people's opinions. The voting resulted in the following list of TEN BEST, listed in order of preference:

1. Boys Town
2. You Can't Take It With You
3. Alexander's Ragtime Band
4. Marie Antoinette

The following break-down of the vote into the choices of boys and girls of different age groups may have a special interest for those who would like to compare tastes.

BOYS (9-13 years)

Boys Town
The Adventures of Robin Hood
You Can't Take It With You
Drums



Pierre Fresnay and Eric von Stroheim in "Grand Illusion" chosen as the best film of 1938

5. Suez
6. The Adventures of Robin Hood
7. The Citadel
8. Four Daughters
9. In Old Chicago
10. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

It is obvious from this list that what young people like in the movies is just about what grown people like. It is a notably catholic list, covering about all types of movies except frivolous comedies and sentimental romances, and including many that might have been expected to appeal only to the adult intelligence.

The Buccaneer
Alexander's Ragtime Band
The Citadel
Test Pilot
Hurricane
Marie Antoinette

BOYS (14-17 years)

Boys Town
You Can't Take It With You
The Citadel
Suez
Alexander's Ragtime Band
Marie Antoinette
The Adventures of Robin Hood

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
 Drums
 If I Were King
 GIRLS (9-13)
 Boys Town
 Alexander's Ragtime Band
 Love Finds Andy Hardy
 You Can't Take It With You
 Four Daughters
 That Certain Age
 Suez
 In Old Chicago
 Little Miss Broadway
 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
 GIRLS (14-17 years)
 Boys Town
 Marie Antoinette
 Alexander's Ragtime Band
 You Can't Take It With You
 Suez
 Four Daughters
 The Adventures of Robin Hood
 In Old Chicago
 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
 Love Finds Andy Hardy

Pygmalion

Adapted by Bernard Shaw from his own play, scenario by W. P. Lipscomb, Cecil Lewis and Ian Dalrymple, directed by Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard, photographed by Harry Stradling. Music by Arthur Honegger, sets by Laurence Irving. Produced by Gabriel Pascal. distributed by Metro Goldwyn Mayer.

The Cast

Higgins	Leslie Howard
Eliza	Wendy Hiller
Doolittle	Wilfred Lawson
Mrs. Higgins	Marie Lohr
Colonel Pickering	Scott Sunderland
Mrs. Pearce	Jean Cadell
Freddy	David Tree
Count Aristid Karpathy	Esme Percy
Ambassador	Violet Vanbrugh
Ysabel	Iris Hoey
Perfide	Viola Tree
Duchess	Irene Brown
Vicar	O. B. Florence
First bystander	Wally Patch
Second	F. H. Maltby
Third	George Mozart
Sarcastic	Ivor Barnard
Mrs. Eynsford Hill	Everley Gregg
Grand Old Lady	Kate Cutler

WITH *Pygmalion*, Bernard Shaw has converted himself to the movies. After all his jibes at the cinema and its makers, he has turned his own clever

hand to the fashioning of a motion picture, and he finds it good. Therefore the movies themselves are good, or can be—if he makes them. Of course Mr. Shaw's prattle about what a wonder he is has gone rather stale in its incessant repetition during the last half century: he has been his own Ziegfeld, needing no impressario to glorify him, and the cuteness of a pixie with whiskers begins to creak after a few decades. But once more he is right. *Pygmalion* is a good film, or if not precisely a good film it is a good thing *for* the film, abstractly, and—best of all—excellent entertainment. Shaw can't teach Hollywood anything about the making of pictures, though of course he thinks he can, but he can teach audiences (if he can reach them) to increase their expectations from the screen, just as the National Board and believers in the movies everywhere have been aiming to do these many years. Hollywood can do anything enough people want it to do. Once let it hear the path beating at its door and Hollywood will inevitably supply the mouse-trap.

Shaw is one of the great vulgarizers (i.e., popularizers) of the twentieth century. A spinsterish mid-wife for the ideas of more original thinkers than himself, a home missionary preaching shrilly and wittily to a smallish audience that has seen his beard turn from red to snowy white, there is no knowing how much he has accomplished. Through his vigorous stirring of young-thinking admirers he has probably added something to the mental landscape of innumerable literate people, and through them to the mass mind. Now through the medium of the movies he is somewhat condescendingly attacking the mass mind from a new approach. Whether the mass mind has any ear for him, directly, remains to be seen.

All of this is a rather heavy prelude to the simple statement that *Pygmalion*, Shaw's first personal contribution to the screen, is a very funny comedy. Essentially it is nothing more than an elaborate joke, spun out by means of dialogue to the expected length of a screen-play, and provided with enough hints of sentiment to feed the imagination of those who want a bit of feeling in addition to bright talk in their entertainment.

Talky it is, and in an English way that may well be tiresome if not downright unintelligible to mentally non-urban audiences, but the technique that Hollywood has given the world (and for which Mr. Shaw, if he enjoys any success in the nation's movie houses, may well thank the gods of mammon) has done some of its magic, by constantly keeping a camera illusion of action where no action actually is, to create a sense of movement through the talkiness.

Pygmalion is a better picture than it was a play. Shaw has cut from his original, and added to it, so that with the help of good direction and more than good acting he has given his modern version of the myth about a sculptor whose statue came to life a humanness and likeability it never had before. The story is extremely local—Britishly local—and has to do with teaching a Cockney flower-girl with the cockneyest of speech to talk the King's English so flawlessly that she could be passed off as a duchess. A professor of phonetics training a girl to speak correctly sounds dry enough, but it is an extremely amusing thing to see happen, as it happens in this film, with a novel sort of excitement about it. Its appeal—even its humorous appeal—is a good deal to the mind, as written, but as acted by Wendy Hiller it manages to reach down into the sympathies also, and stir a human interest in the girl who got cultured beyond her station and found herself without a place in the world. Shaw has even let a touch of romance and emotion creep in for those who care for it, so that the finish may be taken as an odd but happy ending for a love story. The sculptor found his statue necessary to him after he had grown accustomed to her being alive: Shaw's way of implying that he fell in love with her.

Leslie Howard not only acted the professor, in a characteristic Leslie Howard fashion that will satisfy his admirers, but assisted Anthony Asquith in the direction. Just who contributed most to this directorial collaboration cannot be guessed, but the sum of it is what makes *Pygmalion* seem more of a real movie than it actually is. And Arthur Honneger has composed a musical score that is witty and a real help. But G. B. S. is probably the man to whom most

of the credit for the film belongs, for he wrote the script and undoubtedly approved everything he didn't devise himself.

But he couldn't have devised Wendy Hiller. He merely gave her scope, and she, in turn, will have given him every bit of popular success that *Pygmalion* achieves. Her Eliza Doolittle is one of the outstanding pieces of screen acting of the year. Wilfred Lawson and Jean Cadell also do a lot to make the picture (odd though it sounds) both Shavian and human. J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional.

Have You Any Magazines To Spare?

THE Museum of Modern Art Film Library wishes to have a complete file of the National Board of Review Magazine for binding but they find certain issues lacking. Since we cannot supply them we are calling upon our readers, many of whom have taken our Magazine for a long time. The missing issues are: Volume II, Nos. 5 and 6, May, June, 1927; Volume III, No. 1, January, 1928; Volume IV, Nos. 1-4, January-April, 1929; Volume V, Nos. 4-6, April-June, 1930; Volume VII, No. 8, November, 1932.

If you can supply these will you please send them directly to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 485 Madison Avenue, N. Y. C., or to this office and your 20c per copy will be sent to you, but your greatest return will be in the service you are kindly doing in completing this library's records.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

f HEART OF THE NORTH—Dick Foran, Gloria Dickson. Novel by William Byron Mowery. Directed by Lewis Seiler. A colorful story of thieves and the Mounted Police in the Canadian Northwest. First National.

f IL MIO DESTINO (My Destiny)—Emma Gramatica. Based on story by Salvatore Gotta. Directed by Mario Mattoli. An interesting picture, all in Italian, about a wrong done to a noble lady and how it was righted. The acting is excellent, particularly the part of La Damigella, who grows old with extraordinary convincingness. Roma Films.

(Continued on page 21)

Value of the Motion Picture in Teaching Drama and Diction

By JOSEPHINE ALLENSWORTH

The Discussion Topic a few months back asking the question "Should the Study of the Motion Picture in Schools, Colleges and Universities Occupy as Important a Place as Literature, Drama and Music?" brought forth many worthwhile affirmative comments. Here Miss Josephine Allensworth, Chairman of Motion Pictures and Visual Aids for the National Association of Teachers of Speech, and Advisor of the 4-Star Club, Humes High School, Memphis, Tennessee, presents a valid pro argument from her teaching experience.

THE motion picture should occupy an important place in the curriculum of our schools because it has become the most powerful teaching device that has been developed in the twentieth century.

To the growing, restless, irresponsible high school boys and girls the movies are the chief form of amusement, and well they might be if these young people have the right guidance and study in selecting their pictures. Hence we teachers, if we hope to be leaders in the cultural development of our country and our school, must begin to analyze the type of pictures our students should see and try to give them some standards of appreciation by which to judge a picture and at the same time to become an intelligent movie patron. In this way we will show the producers there is a demand for high class films and they will continue to make them.

At the present time the motion picture is our most significant force in controlling mass education. Statistics reveal that an average of 85,000,000 people in 1937 attended the movies weekly, and yet the film producers are daily trying to raise that standard and reach the more discriminating people who are not habitual movie fans. They are succeeding, for never before have we had literature, drama, and history presented to the masses so artistically and so entertainingly as we are now witnessing it.

What better place in the entire high school or college curriculum can we suggest that the study of the motion picture be put than in connection with drama or with general literature which contains drama?

In the last five years, in which I have been teaching motion picture appreciation, I have found that students, who came to me without any preparation or background for drama, are led more willingly to study a play and analyze it, if it has already been put in the movies and has won their interest, or if it is going to be made into a movie.

It has been our custom at Humes High School for many years to teach *A Tale of Two Cities* in the twelfth grade. Year after year this became more difficult—at times students almost rebelled at an assignment in the text, but the year in which the movie was made became a red letter day for me, for the students not only read the assignment but eagerly devoured a great amount of material in our libraries on the French Revolutionary period. Hollywood sent us the actual "shooting script" with all sound effects indicated. This became the most precious volume in our drama library. It was read and used for an acting script for months before the picture came. What fun we had in guessing how this scene would be played, how this actor would look, how this sound would be made, and if anything in the entire picture would be as good as we were!

This experience made me realize the importance in keeping abreast of the fine current pictures that are absorbing the attention of the public.

Feeling as I do that the motion picture deserves the same consideration in schools, colleges, and universities that we give the study of appreciation courses in literature, art, music, and drama, I decided on several objectives for this study. It is an accepted fact that the more we know about any one particular thing, the more we appreciate it; so to approach the study of a picture from an appreciation and entertainment angle, one satisfies not only the longing for emotional reaction, for which one generally goes to the movies, but receives a greater stimulus, such as curiosity, a desire to learn

more about certain phases of the picture.

The greatest interest naturally centers around the story, the analysis of which may be considered the first objective. One should begin the discussion by paying careful attention to the plot in both tragedies and comedies, studying the stages in plot development, namely; exposition, complication or rising action, climax, resolution or consequence, and denouement. Does the story have a strong audience appeal, one that is properly motivated? A strong feeling of suspense and an unexpected ending?

This study was particularly effective in such plays as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Stage Door*, *Yellow Jack*, *Holiday*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *The Shining Hour*.

The second objective in making practical a study of the motion picture for dramatic purposes is to consider the technique of acting. We discuss such problems as these: Is the actor perfectly natural? Does he make the audience feel he is a real person? Is his characterization good? Does he understand the character he is portraying and is he developing it intelligently? Is his make-up suitable to the play and to the characterization? *Victoria The Great* is just one of the many examples of the miracles of modern make-up.

In order to create a more extensive interest in drama both on the screen and on the stage, the third objective deals with a comparison of the stage play and the motion picture version. Questions of this nature arise: Is the play adapted to the methods of the screen? Since the dialogue must be condensed and changed, will the picture be ruined for one who has seen it on the stage? Since the screen play has been chosen because of the popularity of the stage play, does it present something that is in itself good? Is the screen more adaptable for an authentic historical background? Can the interest of verse be sustained in the movies as well as on the stage and its lyric quality kept. Can biography and history be portrayed more successfully on the screen? Does a historical picture have more continuity and flow than the stage play?

Victoria the Great, *Victoria Regina*, *Stage Door*, *Winterset*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, make intensely interesting dramas for this comparison.

Our study of these plays and then of the movies has been a great stimulus to reading. In all probability we would not have studied the stage play had we not first become interested in the movie version. Therefore the motion picture has been a great source of inspiration as well as of information, by stimulating the interest and activity of the students. They now look beyond the mere superficial idea of entertainment and see that by their intelligent and careful study new standards may be established in the field of cinema arts and a more enlightened future made possible for the masses.

Since the motion pictures are interpreting the spoken drama to millions weekly who never will see a good play presented in any other manner, they are invaluable in teaching diction and dialect, keeping in mind of course that only certain ones can be used to an advantage and certain actors and actresses suggested as models for their purity of speech.

To make our students conscious of good speech is one of our greatest tasks, but now with the help of the radio and the talkies the task is much simpler than it was ten years ago, even five years ago.

Educators have long since realized that the stage can do very little toward improving regional pronunciations on account of its limited audience. Its influence of two hundred years or more (the first stage play in America having been given in the first decade of the eighteenth century) has not been felt by the masses so far as diction is concerned, because in that length of time regional dialects have developed. However, in the twelve years of the talkies, the masses have become more ear minded and enjoy speech that is adequate for understanding, that is not flat and thin and nasal like the typical American voice. They see the mouth open and the lips move with the sound of the words and wonder what has been the trouble with themselves all these years.

There is practically no sectional dialect in the best movies of today, but instead a beautiful cultural speech is being used that may become in time a standard American speech, or if my readers prefer, that may become an accepted general American speech that is used by the best educated classes of today.

Our students in motion picture apprecia-

tion have had much pleasure in listening to the pronunciation of certain words and bringing them to the meetings for discussion and for practice to improve their own pronunciation or dialect if they are working on a play in which dialect is used.

In *David Copperfield* we heard the peculiarities of the Yorkshire dialect and found out the way the Peggotys talked as Dickens portrayed them.* Lionel Barrymore as Dan Peggoty, and Jessie Ralph who played Peggoty the nurse, were outstanding in their portrayal of the Yorkshire dialect and were of special interest to those who were preparing a reading from "David Copperfield." One student told the story of "David Copperfield" and quite unconsciously put in some of the Yorkshire dialect.

In *Victoria the Great* we heard impeccable diction. The German accent of Anton Walbrook and the beautiful clear English of Anna Neagle were worth listening to over and over. It could not help improving the speech of those of us who listened not to imitate but to learn. Each syllable was enunciated clearly and beautifully.

Mayerling gave us an excellent lesson in French and an opportunity to hear speech that was similar to a musical accompaniment. The plot was so intriguing that students decided to read more about the famous Archduke Rudolph of Austria. We chose Maxwell Anderson's *Masque of Kings*, thereby adding another brilliant drama to our lists.

In all of Ronald Colman's pictures, we again heard flawless diction. His rendition of the exquisite poetry in *If I Were King* was an incentive to read and recite some of Francois Villon's masterpieces.

Both *Mayerling* and *If I Were King* furnished subjects for radio skits. The best skits in the group were used over our local station. This gave many students the opportunity to appear on a radio for the first time and a chance to see how necessary a cultural speech is and how difficult good diction is without constant work.

Each one in a movie audience will be most interested in what he knows the most about, and this knowledge and understanding will partly determine his reaction to the play. He may be interested in the photography, in the

scenery, in the natural or historical settings, in the music, in the fencing, in the costumes; or if a person is especially interested in speech and drama, he will be vitally concerned with the voices, the inflections, the rhythm, and the pronunciations—as we are in our motion picture study. So consider what excellent opportunities teachers of Speech and English have in helping their students to become interested in studying the splendid interpretation of drama that is being given by the camera.

Junior Replies to a Questionnaire

STATISTICS which bear upon the interest of children in motion pictures have always been popular with readers of the Magazine, and we print them from time to time. This month we present two responses to a questionnaire prepared by the National Board of Review for its junior 4-Star Clubs. One is from a girls' group: the Motion Picture Club of Willoghby Junior High School, Miss Josephine McGinness, Advisor; and the other from a boys' group: the Movie Club of Clark Junior High School, Miss Olga Koppe, Advisor. The questionnaire was answered by 39 girls and 54 boys, the average age being 13½.

A large majority of boys and girls went to the movies neither more nor less frequently than once a week. Both boys and girls agreed that they were happiest when choosing their own films; few liked to be told what to see. Opinions differed, however, over the question of "How do you choose your Movies?" since 52% of the boys depended in varying degrees upon what they read in newspaper and magazine reviews, and only half that percentage tended to choose according to the actors featured. While with the girls, the method of choice was less one-sided; they depended almost equally upon both actors and reviews. They were also a great deal readier than the boys to trust a friend's recommendation!

The next question: "What kind of movies do you like?" again showed divergences of opinion between boys and girls. The girls gave realistic pictures the top place, with musicals a close second, and adventure, drama, mystery, romance, comedy, sad, historical, sport, Western and war following in that order, with only one or two votes separating the respective categories. The boys plumped whole-heartedly for adventure, placing comedy a bad second, closely followed by historical. These three were easy winners: the remainder, with comparatively few votes, followed in this order: mystery, sport, musical, realistic, drama, war and western—no votes for sad and romantic!

The question: "Name the movies you have liked best" cannot serve as a basis for comparison between boy-and-girl tastes, since the questionnaires were not submitted at the same time and the boys' votes do not include pictures released after June 1938. The boys put *The Buccaneer* in first place with a three vote lead over *The Plainsman*, while *The Informer* and *Zola* tied a close third. Others with good votes from the boys were, in order, *Marco Polo*, *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, *The Good Earth* and *In Old Chicago* (tied), *Hurricane*, *Snow White* and *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Twelve other pictures were mentioned but only received negligible votes.

The girls' vote was overwhelmingly in favor of *Boys' Town*, which drew more than two-thirds of their total votes. (This picture had not been seen by the boys at the time of making their replies and it can be confidently prophesied that they will give it somewhere near top rating when they choose their Ten Best of the year.) *Dead End* and *Mad About Music* tied for second place with a mere five votes, with *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, *Carefree* and *Algiers* tied third. *The Crowd Roars*, *Four Daughters*, *My Lucky Star* tied fourth.

Boys and girls came back into agreement over the question of how much talk there should be in a movie. They wanted action rather than words by a large majority. As to love-interest, two-thirds of the boys would have none of it, while two-thirds of the girls were all for it—enough to give

any calculating producer a headache. Both groups liked their movies to have child actors.

Although some boys and a few girls wrote that the movies had spoiled their favorite books, they were quite in agreement about having their favorite books turned into motion pictures. Three-quarters of the boys enjoyed movies that combined entertainment and instruction; the girls voting unanimously for this. There was about the same affirmative response to the question of whether the movies had helped them in their school-work, and in favor of having educational films shown in the classrooms. The question of whether they would enjoy motion picture appreciation study in school was all but unanimously favored by boys and girls—one small girl, for reasons we shall never know, dissenting.

The final question caused another split. "Which do you like best: Athletics, Movies, Reading, Games, Radio?" The boys liked them in that order, with athletics leading movies by a long way, and reading a poor third. The girls, however, put movies well in the first place, comfortably ahead of radio, with athletics, reading and games tailing.

It would be impractical to base any conclusions upon these replies, since they cover too small a number of children to be valid as indicative of any real trend. We present the replies simply as a matter of interest to those readers who might wish to compare them with their own findings, or issue a similar questionnaire to their own pupils.

THE motion picture in the theatre is familiar to all, the motion picture in the school is familiar to many, but not so much is known about the motion picture in business. However it will not be difficult conveniently to find information on this last in the new "Business Screen" published in Chicago. This is a periodical good to look at and easy to read and it is confined not alone to the interest of producers and users of business films but covers also any non-theatrical film interest.

We Welcome to Membership

TWO new members have been added this month to the Board's National Motion Picture Council. They are Mrs. Raymond R. Bear and Mrs. Joseph L. White.

Mrs. Bear is Pennsylvania State D. A. R. Chairman of Motion Pictures. In spite of this exacting State office she finds time for other motion picture interests, for she is also Motion Picture Chairman of the Women's Club in her home community of Allentown, Pa. and Program Chairman of the Philadelphia Motion Picture Forum. Mrs. Bear often comes to New York for various meetings of the Board and has shown her interest in other ways so this is further cementing an already close connection with the Board.

Mrs. White is the able President of the Montclair (N. J.) Motion Picture Council. This Council was formed in 1931 and Mrs. White has been its leader since 1933. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Metropolitan Motion Picture Council, the Board's New York City Council which includes many groups in the Metropolitan area. Another of Mrs. White's motion picture interests is with the National Y.W.C.A. We feel that she will give valuable service to the Council and welcome her into this closer affiliation.

What Our Readers Say

OUR recent mail has been particularly cheery with the receipt of so many gay Christmas cards from our correspondents. We heartily thank you and extend our wishes to all of you for a very fine 1939.

As we dwelt upon the subject of mail the thought came to us of how cheering our mail is the year-around through receiving gracious words of praise from many in connection with our publications and services. To let you know how we appreciate these "kind words" we are printing some below, and the other way in which we hope to show our appreciation is to have you call upon us often so that we may be of continuing service to you.

Mrs. A. S. Tucker, Louisiana Council for Motion Pictures—"Please let me compliment you on the National Board of Review Magazine. It is one of the most interesting and informative magazines that has to do with motion pictures."

Miss Kathryn Allebach, President, Reading (Pa.) Motion Picture Forum—"We have received the Council materials which you so generously sent us for assistance in considering and effecting a city-wide organization. Your literature will contribute vitally. . . ."

Mr. S. Barret McCormick, Director of Advertising and Publicity, RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.—"Thank you for the copy of the National Board of Review Magazine containing the very fine review on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*."

Mrs. A. F. Burt, Chairman, Committee on Motion Pictures, General Federation of Women's Clubs, St. Louis, Missouri—"It was kind of you to send me the issues of the Magazine. They are interesting and very helpful. We shall send our subscriptions at an early date."

Miss Eleanor M. Dye, Librarian, Teachers College, Columbia University—"We have found the magazine a very valuable one and have used it with our students constantly."

Mrs. Galen Brooks, Chairman, Niagara Falls Federated Church Women, Motion Picture Committee—"I wish these back copies of the National Board of Review Magazine, Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures and Alphabetical Index could be mailed to me as I am terribly handicapped without them."

Mrs. Oliver J. Haller, Chairman, Motion Picture Committee, Pennsylvania Federation of Women's Clubs—"I have been using your leaflets, 'The National Board of Review, Its Background, Growth and Present Status' and 'How It Works'—in the packages of material I sent out for program helps. If you approve of this procedure may I have some additional copies. I am completely out."

Mr. Harold Turney, Chairman, Department of Drama, Los Angeles (Calif.) Junior College—"Congratulations on the excellent job you are doing in editing the Magazine. Every copy is a priceless gem of invaluable aid in our work."

Mrs. W. O. Merrill, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan—"I want to thank you for the copy of the Magazine sent to me, and enter my subscription for a year. Will you please send me all back copies which have reports of the Council meeting which I attended? This is very fine material for my work, and I want to be sure to get it all."

Mrs. Ina Roberts, Editor, "Books and Films," Hollywood, Calif.—"I have received your letter of the 15th and the fine list of (Selected Book Films) enclosed." They were both just what I needed.

Professor Sawyer Falk, Dept. of Drama, Syracuse University—"Thank you for your very kind letter giving me the information about films. Thank you besides for the list of distributors that followed it. Both of these items have been of inestimable service to me."

Mr. Arthur H. Goldstein, Avon Theatre Unique, Providence, R. I.—"Please send me copies of your 'Selected Pictures Catalog. This is a repeat order but unfortunately for me my booking office happened to see the catalogs I

had and realizing their great worth and the excellent job done by your organization in putting these out, permanently borrowed my copy. . . ."

Mrs. A. J. Saleeby, State Motion Picture Chairman, Vermont Federation of Women's Clubs—"I wish to thank you for the copies of the Magazine and the other material which you so generously sent me for my exhibit at our State meeting. They made an interesting addition to our exhibit and were greatly appreciated. I think your Magazine is excellent. . . . I feel it would be of great value in my work as State Chairman."

Mrs. J. D. Woodward, Corresponding Secretary, Cincinnati (O.) Motion Picture Council—"I want to thank you for the literature you sent us. It was read carefully."

Mr. Charles E. McCarthy, Director of Advertising and Publicity, Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp.—"Thanks very much for your letter and the enclosed copy of the National Board of Review Magazine. The review on *In Old Chicago* was a very fine one and we appreciate it very much."

Mrs. J. W. Livingston, President, Better Films Council of Grand Rapids, Michigan—"May I thank you for your courtesy in sending me the National Board of Review Magazine, which contained so much information of interest to me? Keeping in touch with you throughout the year will be a pleasure and inspiration to us."

Mrs. L. R. Andrews, Chairman, Committee on Motion Pictures, Florida Federation of Women's Clubs—"Your letter full of information is a great help and I am sure you will give me some good suggestions. . . . I want to put the National Board of Review Magazine in every club in this state."

Mrs. Elliott B. Williams, Chairman, Motion Picture Division, State Federation of Women's Clubs, Milton, Mass.—"The literature compiled by the National Board of Review received and many thanks for same. It would be very appropriate for our Committee members to possess copies of "Activities for Community Motion Picture Councils," inasmuch as we are encouraging the forming of these Councils throughout the State."

Mrs. O. W. Crawshaw, Motion Picture Chairman, Federation of Women's Club of Greater Cleveland—"The "Weekly Guides" which I have been receiving are most interesting and a decided help since at a glance one can determine the type of important pictures and "shorts". I keep them in a convenient place for constant reference. The information gleaned as the point of view of the National Board of Review is invaluable to me and of much help in deciding policies concerning the questions at issue."

Mrs. George L. Schwartz, Publicity Chairman, Wilmington (Del.) Better Films Council—"Let me congratulate you on your recent issue of "The National Board of Review Magazine" for November. I am enclosing my subscription for 1939." I enjoyed immensely the articles "Two Views of Standardization" and Mr. Langdon Post's article on "Social and Propaganda Films."

Mrs. William M. Wolverton, Motion Picture Chairman, Easton Woman's Club—"I do so enjoy the Magazine."

Mrs. J. G. Foster, Secretary, Billings (Mont.) Better Films Council—"We wish to express thanks and appreciation for the cooperation shown the Billings Better Films Council and for the helpful reports and commendations submitted by your Council."

Mr. William M. Sutton, Director, Department of Research, Kiwanis International—"Many thanks for your very helpful letter in reply to my request for suggestions on films in vocational guidance programs. I shall follow every one of your suggestions because I am sure that responses from the sources of information you listed will give me a comprehensive bibliography."

Mr. W. F. Kruse, Chicago, Ill—"Thank you for your kindness in digging up the old reports. It was mighty nice to be able to go back almost twenty years to get this data, and the fact that you were able to do so with so little difficulty certainly speaks volumes for the efficiency and continuity with which your records are maintained."

Mrs. William Cornwell, Chairman, Motion Picture Division, Philadelphia Federation of Women's Clubs and Allied Organizations—"Many thanks for the Outline of Activities for club programs. There is a wealth of material in it. . . . The Motion Picture Forum sends me your magazine as a gift—my chairmen make an endless chain of it—read it one evening—wrap in an envelope—and re-mail it to the next member on the list."

Mrs. Mina C. Brann, The Oaks, Cabin John, Md.—"Thank you for your letter. How we all enjoy the Magazine which I always pass along where it will do the most good."

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 15)

- f KENTUCKY—Walter Brennan, Loretta Young, Richard Greene. Based on story "The Look of Eagles" by John Taintor Foote. Directed by David Butler. A story of horses and racing and romance and a family feud, lifted out of the ordinary by exceptionally good color, which gives it real vitality. 20th Century-Fox.
- f NEWSBOYS' HOME—Jackie Cooper, Little Tough Guys. Original screen story by Gordon Kahn. Directed by Harold Young. A story of two rival newspapers and the warfare between the boys on the honest paper and those selling the paper run by a crook. Universal.
- f ORPHANS OF THE STREET—Tommy Ryan, Robert Livingston. Screen story by Erle Felton. Directed by John H. Auer. The story of a boy and a dog, and how the boy got money to go back to his boarding school instead of an orphanage. Republic.
- f PACIFIC LINER—Victor McLaglen, Chester Morris, Wendy Barrie. Original screen story by Anthony Coldeway and Henry Roberts Symonds. Directed by Lew Landers. The life in the engine room of a big liner when cholera breaks out, bringing the

ship into port without endangering the passengers. Grimly powerful. RKO Radio.

- fj **PECK'S BAD BOY AT THE CIRCUS**—Tommy Kelly, Ann Gillis. Based on characters by George Peck. Directed by Edward F. Cline. An engaging juvenile story, in which young William is not particularly bad but gets into a lot of adventures. Tommy Kelly is growing into a very good boy actor. RKO Radio.

- f ***PYGMALION**—See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 14.

- f **SMASHING THE SPY RING**—Ralph Bellamy, Fay Wray. Story by Dorrell and Stuart McGowen. Directed by Christy Cabanne. A good story of the spy system and how it was smashed. Ralph Bellamy poses as a patient in the hospital run by the leader of the spy ring, and is enabled to get the goods on the entire spy ring. Columbia.

- f **STAND UP AND FIGHT**—Wallace Beery, Robert Taylor, Florence Rice. Original screen story by Forbes Parkhill. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke, II. Romance and vigorous action in Maryland during the 1840's with a rivalry between stage-coaches and the new railroad and a gang capturing runaway slaves and re-selling them, as principle ingredients of the plot. Colorful, with story elements that have not been overworked. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **STRANGE CASE OF DOCTOR MEADE, THE**—Jack Holt, Beverley Roberts. Original screen story by Gordon Rigny. Directed by Lewis D. Collins. The struggle of a doctor to bring health measures into a backward community. Interesting in theme and action. Columbia.

- f **SWEETHEARTS** — Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy. Based on the Victor Herbert operetta. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke. A lavish production done in technicolor well acted with song hits. The story of the two co-stars in "Sweethearts" who are married and, finding they have no time to themselves, decide to walk out, only to have the producer, press agent and authors play a practical joke on them, comes near to tragedy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **THANKS FOR EVERYTHING**—Jack Haley, Adolph Menjou, Jack Oakie, Binnie Barnes. Original screen story by Gilbert Wright. Directed by William A. Seiter. A very amusing comedy, mingled with satire, about a high-powered advertising agency and an Average Man. 20th Century-Fox.

- j **TOM SAWYER, DETECTIVE**—Donald O'Connor, Billy Cook. Based on novel by Mark Twain. Directed by Louis King. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn become detectives and save Tom's uncle from a murder conviction. Paramount.

- f ***TOPPER TAKES A TRIP**—Roland Young, Constance Bennett, Billie Burke. Based on novel by Thorne Smith. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. Marian Kerby, of "Topper" has to finish her good deed (clearing up the difficulties between Mr. and Mrs. Topper) before she can go on to join her husband. Novel and amusing, with Roland Young particularly funny. United Artists.

- f **TOUGH KID**—Frankie Darro, Dick Purcell, Judith Allen. Original screen story by Brenda Weisberg. Directed by Howard Bretherton. Much better than average story of a young prize-fighter and his kid brother who serves him both as trainer and guardian when the racketeers get to work on selling the fight. Monogram.

- m **TRADE WINDS**—Fredric March, Joan Bennett, Ann Sothorn, Ralph Bellamy. Original screen story and direction by Tay Garnett. A comedy melodrama of a man's chase into the Orient of a girl accused of murder. Constantly interesting with unusually bright dialogue—on the sophisticated side. United Artists.

- f **UP THE RIVER**—Preston Foster, Arthur Treacher, Phyllis Brooks, Tony Martin. Original screen story by Maurine Watkins. Directed by Alfred Werker. An immensely funny comedy about—of all things—prison life, in which two incorrigible crooks not only help a young fellow get back to a law-abiding life but win the inter-prison football game for their home team. 20th Century-Fox.

- f **WILD HORSE CANYON**—Jack Randall, Dorothy Short. Original screen story by Robert Emmett. Directed by Robert Hill. One of the best Westerns for a long time; a good story of rustling including some fine riding and really tense situations. Monogram.

- m **ZAZA**—Claudette Colbert, Herbert Marshall. From the play by Pierre Berton. Directed by George Cukor. An entertaining story of a French music hall favorite who gives up everything for the man she loves only to find out he is married. Determined to have him she goes to see his wife and there meets his small daughter and she goes back to her career. There is some excellent acting. Paramount.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f **BERMUDA—ISLE OF PARADISE** (Columbia Tours)—Beautiful scenes of Bermuda in color. Columbia.
- f **DEN IS JUNI 1938** (Swedish King's 80 Year Jubilee, The)—Given over mostly to speeches and parades, but it may have an interest to Swedes. Chiefly newsreel in style, and very long. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f **EUROPA'S VAERMELEDNING** (The Gulf-stream's Importance to Sweden)—A most instructive account of where the Gulf-stream begins and ends, good commentary and diagrams. Lack of English titles reduces value for English students. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.

- f FASHION FORECASTS (Fashions—In Color)—Attractive styles for snow and beach, with lovely models and bright technicolor. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FOOTBALL GIANTS (News World of sport series)—Training the New York Giants, using the slow motion camera for spectacular plays. Columbia.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 4 (5th Series)—Considering the space it had to give to the subject this is a surprisingly extensive as well as informative account of the Foreign Service section of our Department of State. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 5 (5th Series)—The Refugee, Today and Tomorrow. The refugees whom war has driven from China and Spain, with particular and vigorous emphasis on the Hitler persecutions which are sending exiles out of Germany. RKO Radio.
- fj NATURE'S MIMICS (Color Parade)—Performing animals and some clever Indian trick birds. Vitaphone.
- f *OH SAY, CAN YOU SKI (Paragraphics)—An excellent picture of learning to ski, done in color. Paramount.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 5—Seventeen-year locusts; screen paintings—Robert Bruce (color); the Hit Parade of Yesterday—songs of the gay nineties with some shots of old time film. The first part is educational, the second part pictorially beautiful and the third part just amusing. Paramount.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 6—Scenes of Nairobi; gadgets for race horses; the milkman's broadcast. Paramount.
- fj PROVINCE OF QUEBEC (Columbia Tours)—Picturesque view of French Canada, with some odd pronunciations of French names by the commentator. Columbia.
- f RULLANDE HOTELL (Rolling Hotels)—Interesting material about modern Swedish railroads. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f SIDNEY, PRIDE OF AUSTRALIA (Fitzpatrick Travel Talks)—Scenes of Beautiful Sidney in technicolor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj SINGAPORE AND JAHOE—A colorful and interesting Fitzpatrick Traveltalk. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SKI RHYTHM (News World of Sport series)—Expert skiing. Columbia.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 3—Using fish nets for gadgets on Cape Cod; a Mexican gold and silversmith; a Texan makes dye out of cigarette bags; in England roof thatching and wax works; Warren Williams and his many inventive gadgets.

MUSICALS, NOVELTIES AND SERIALS

- f CLYDE LUCAS AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Melody Masters)—Music of various kinds. Vitaphone.
- f COMMUNITY SING NO. 2 (3rd Series)—Singing popular college songs. Columbia.
- fj FROLICKING FROGS (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Trained frogs and the annual frog jumping contest in California. Paramount.
- m MENTAL POISE (Robert Benchley)—A Robert Benchley satire on psycho-analysis, rather subtle but very clever. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PENNY'S PICNIC (Pete Smith Specialties)—Prudence Penny (in color) shows practically useful ways of getting a meal on a picnic. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE (serial) Nos. 3-8.—Jackie Cooper, David Durand, Bill Cody, Jr. Directed by Ray Taylor. Further adventures of the Boy Scouts. Universal.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 1—Hollywood play spots. The chief interest of this series is for those who like to look at stars off-stage, no matter what trivial things they are doing. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 2—A miscellany of Hollywood functions. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 3—Visiting the Hollywood stars at work and play. Columbia.
- f SWINGTIME IN THE MOVIES—Amusing satire on a movie-director at work. Includes many stars. Done in color. Vitaphone.
- fj TREACHEROUS WATERS (Floyd Gibbons' "Your True Adventure")—How a brave kid saved a boy from drowning. Vitaphone.
- fj TWO BOYS AND A DOG (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A story of two boys and a dog and how they win rodeo tickets. Paramount.

- f UNFINISHED SYMPHONY — The National Philharmonic Orchestra. Paramount.
- f UP IN LIGHTS (Broadway Brevities)—A lively musical, slight in plot, with plenty of singing and dancing. Vitaphone.
- f WRONG WAY OUT, THE—Kenneth Howell, Linda Terry. One of the "Crime Doesn't Pay" series, directed against young people too impatient to get away from home, and becoming desperate through not trusting their parents enough. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

CARTOONS and COMEDIES

- fj ANIMAL CRACKER CIRCUS, THE (Color Rhapsodies)—The animated animal crackers are novel and clever. Columbia.
- fj COPS IS ALWAYS RIGHT (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye has trouble with a cop. Paramount.
- fj CRACKPOT CRUISE—A round the world cruise in seven minutes. Universal.
- fj DONALD'S PENGUIN (Walt Disney)—A Donald Duck cartoon, in which Donald finds a penguin a puzzling pet. Donald is beginning to get soft-hearted. RKO Radio.
- fj GANDY GOOSE IN DOOMSDAY (Terry-toons)—An amusing cartoon based on Chicken-Little and the falling sky. 20th Century-Fox.
- f HOLLYWOOD GRADUATION (Color Rhapsodies)—A cartoon with some good imitations of Hollywood Celebrities. Columbia.
- fj LITTLE BLUE BLACKBIRD—A poor little baby blackbird afraid to fly redeems himself by saving his brothers' lives. Universal.
- f MIDNIGHT FROLICS (Color Rhapsodies)—Some amusing cartoon ghosts clowning and dancing. Columbia.
- fj PORKY THE GOB (Looney Tunes)—Porky destroys the pirate submarine single-handed. Vitaphone.
- fj PRACTICAL JOKERS (Our Gang)—Our gang tries to play a practical joke, but it acts as a boomerang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj PUDGY'S THRILLS AND CHILLS (Betty Boop Cartoon)—Betty takes Pudgy skating. Paramount.

(Continued from page 3)

ing of Club-made films. The session will be held at 10 o'clock at the Hotel Pennsylvania.

The final event of the three day Conference will be the twenty-fourth Annual Luncheon in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel.

You are welcome to all these sessions and you can use this slip in requesting tickets.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

70 Fifth Avenue.

New York City

I will attend the Conference at the Hotel Pennsylvania, February 2nd-4th, 1939. No fee for Conference sessions; tickets upon request or at the door. However, it is necessary to secure a ticket for the Thursday morning session *in advance*, so if you wish one, please check here.

I wish luncheon tickets (\$2.00 each)—Reservations made in order of receipt. Check for \$..... enclosed herewith.

NAME

ADDRESS

AFFILIATION

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c

Special Film Lists10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

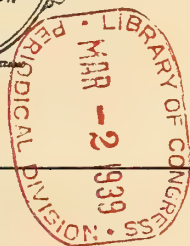
A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XIV, No. 2



February, 1939



This Issue Begins the
Reporting of the Board's

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

February 2nd - 4th
New York City

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by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
 m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
 j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
 *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.
-
- f **BOY SLAVES**—Anne Shirley, Roger Daniel. Original screen story by Albert Bein. Directed by P. J. Woldson. An excellent presentation of the case against child labor. A group of wild boys of the road who are enslaved in a southern turpentine camp and brutally treated. The story is unpleasant but gripping and the acting of the boys is excellent, especially that of Roger Daniel, the suspected stool pigeon, and James McCallion as the leader of the boys. RKO Radio.
-
- f **BOY TROUBLE**—Charles Ruggles, Mary Boland. Based on story by Lloyd Corrigan. Directed by George Archainbaud. An amusing story of a man whose troubles begin when his wife adopts two small boys. Anyone who enjoys the domestic complications that Ruggles and Boland can carry off so well, and the antics of little boys, will no doubt like this picture. Paramount.
-
- f **BURN 'EM UP O'CONNOR**—Dennis O'Keefe, Cecilia Parker, Nat Pendleton. Based on book "Salute to the Gods" by Sir Malcolm Campbell. Directed by Edward Sedgwick. A comedy romance of auto racing that develops into mystery melodrama. Spills, thrills and laughs. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
-
- f **CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU**—Sidney Toler. Original screen story by Charles Belden. Directed by H. Bruce Humberstone. A good murder mystery enlivened with humor, and a fine list of suspects to keep the spectator guessing. Warner Oland has luckily found a perfectly satisfying successor in Sidney Toler as the detective. 20th Century-Fox.
-
- f **FEDERAL MAN HUNT**—Robert Livingston, June Travis. Original screen story by Maxwell Shane. Directed by Nick Grinde. A fast moving story of a man's escape from prison and his eventual capture. It has some plot surprises and the excitement of a good chase. Republic.
-
- f **FIGHTING THOROUGHBREDS**—Ralph Byrd, Robert Allen, Mary Carlisle. Original screen story by Clarence E. Marks and Robert Wyler. Directed by Sidney Salkow. The story of how a horse, trained to bring about revenge upon one family by another, ends in bringing the two families together. A pretty good love story and some good horse racing elements. Republic.
-
- f **GOING PLACES**—Dick Powell, Anita Louise, Allen Jenkins. Original screen story by Laurice Leo, Jerry Wald, Sig Herzig. Directed by Ray Enright. A farce comedy with music—and an amusing one—about a salesman of sporting goods getting into trouble through masquerading as a famous steeplechase rider. First National.
-
- f **GREAT MAN VOTES, THE**—John Barrymore, Peter Holden, Virginia Weidler. Original screen story by John Twist. Directed by Carson Kanin. A comedy, with plenty of sentiment, about a brilliant man who became a drunken bum, and his two small youngsters who tried to make him the great man he started out to be. They succeed, through some amusing manipulation of local politics. RKO Radio.
-
- f ***GUNGA DIN**—Cary Grant, Victor McLaglen, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. Original screen story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Directed by George Stevens. RKO Radio. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 17.
-
- f ***IDIOT'S DELIGHT**—Clark Gable, Norma Shearer, Burgess Meredith. Play by Robert E. Sherwood. Directed by Clarence Brown. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 16.
-
- f ***JESSE JAMES**—Tyrone Power, Henry Fonda, Randolph Scott, Nancy Kelly. Original screen story by Nunnally Johnson. Directed by Henry King. A colorful picture, founded on the already half-legendary figure of America's favorite outlaw hero. It makes much of the point that crime doesn't pay, without destroying the sympathy created for its hero by the circumstances that started his outlaw battle against the railroads. Vigorous and entertaining. 20th Century-Fox.
-
- f **MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING**—Peter Lorre, Ricardo Cortez, Virginia Field.

(Continued on page 15)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Vol. XIV, Number 2

February, 1939

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The Annual Conference

THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures held its Fifteenth Annual Conference in New York City, February 2nd to 4th. "The Making of a Motion Picture" was the general subject of the Conference. Under this topic the following procedures in film production were presented: "The Making of a Scenario" by Dudley Nichols, past president of the Screen Writers Guild, who wrote the scenario for *The Informer*; "Research in the Motion Picture" by Harold Hendee, RKO Radio, Director of Research; "The Problem of Casting" by Miss Marian Robertson, talent scout for RKO Radio; "Music in the Motion Picture" by David Mendoza of the Vitaphone Studios, who scored and presented *Ben Hur* and *The Big Parade*; "The Director's Work" by Dudley Murphy, director of *Emperor Jones* and the recently completed *One Third of a Nation*; "Sound in the Motion Picture" by Reeve O. Strock, sound director of the Eastern Service Studios; "The Actor's Angle" by Franchot Tone; "Montage and Editing" by Slavko Vorkapich of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, one of the foremost artists in his field.

One session, presented at radio station WNYC, had for its subject "Television Today." Stanton Griffis, Chairman of the Executive Board of Paramount Pictures, Inc., spoke on "Television—the Unknown Quantity" and Allen B. Dumont of the Allen B. Dumont Laboratories, on "The Technical Aspects of Television."

All of these addresses will be published in this Magazine, as our readers who were in attendance and many who were not have told us they would like to have this material for study and reference. This issue carries the two broadcasted addresses on television.

There was a panel discussion on "Community Motion Picture Activities," with representatives from many community groups in different parts of the country taking part. The panel talks will also be carried in the Magazine as a means of bringing to a wider public these reportings on activities.

The Saturday morning session was devoted to the junior groups of the National Board, the 4-Star Clubs. Reports of activities were given by juniors and by club advisors and junior made prize-winning films were shown. This session will be fully reported in the 4-Star Final.

The Conference closed with the 24th Annual Luncheon. The speakers there were: Louis de Rochemont, producer and publisher of *March of Time*; Howard Dietz, Director of Publicity for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; Dudley Murphy, director; Padraic Colum, poet. Other celebrities present were, Gladys Cooper, Vincent Price, Robert Morley, Edgar Lee Masters. Langdon Post, of the Board's Executive Committee was luncheon toastmaster and Mrs. Oliver Harriman was hostess of the day.

Television - the Unknown Quantity

By STANTON GRIFFIS

Chairman of the Executive Board of Paramount Pictures, Inc.

COLONEL Bob Ingersoll used to say, "Let's leave it to the evolutionists to tell us where we came from and to the theologians to tell us where we are going to."

The fact remains, we are here. I am going to let Mr. Dumont tell you where television came from and each of you showmen can answer your own questions as to where it is going. The fact remains that it is here. Within a few weeks the broadcasting and reception of television programs in New York City will have become a commonplace.

Paramount Pictures, for many years pioneer in the silent picture days, later doing its share in the tremendous development accompanying the introduction of sound and for some time an important factor in the radio industry, has in television taken its first exploratory steps through the Dumont Company, believing that while the future of the new art is still obscure it is bound to be closely correlated with the motion picture industry, with the probability that each art and each business will complement the other.

No one can foretell the speed with which television will develop, but it is reasonable to feel that the characteristic intense curiosity of the American people about any new scientific development is not changed, and that when the broadcasting of television programs is brought within reach of a large part of the population, starting principally in New York City, the popular interest and the desire to enjoy and study the new art will be tremendous.

In the British Isles which present a territory with a much greater concentration of population than here and with the entire broadcasting business in the hands of the government agencies, under the strictest control but with commercial motives entirely lacking, we are told that about 10,000 television receiving sets have been sold during the last few months and that the British

Broadcasting Corporation is cooperating with the manufacturing associations on a drive to increase the number of sets to 100,000 during 1939.



STANTON GRIFFIS

In England, programs are running for about 17 hours a week and receiving sets can be purchased with a range of price, from as low as around \$100 to fantastic maximums, which include the combination of radio, gramophone and television. In the United States it would seem to me a fair guess might be that from 30,000 to 100,000 receiving sets will be manufactured and sold within the coming year.

From the point of view of the film industry we of Paramount believe that the development of television will bring into being in the studios new departments, both for the adaptation of old films to television programs as well as the manufacture of new specialty films of an entirely different nature for television programs.

Our laboratories are working along this line. It is our belief for the next few years a tremendous percentage of all televised pro-

grams will be from films and not from direct photography.

For the exhibitor we see the televising of great sports and other current events as an important adjunct to your news reel programs. Some day you will use transmission of the world panorama of news for projection directly on your great screens, but I fear this is a long way off.

You ladies and gentlemen of the motion picture world are bound to meditate as to the ultimate effect on the development of a nationwide demand for television and combinations of radio and television. Fortunately, perhaps, no final verdict will be brought on this for a long time. If you will look back you will agree, I think, that the development of radio has complemented and gone hand in hand with the development of the motion picture without any great damage to either and perhaps profit to both.

In Madison Square Garden we do not believe that the staging of a broadcast on the nights when the all-conquering Louis comes to town affects our sale of seats, although countless people will listen to the blow-by-blow description—that is, if there is more than one blow in a Louis fight. We do not believe when you will actually be able to see the fight on your television cabinets, sitting by your own fireside, that you will be found by that fireside rather

than at the Garden. Yet, the Garden will expect tremendously increased revenue from its television activity.

In motion pictures I am sure of one thing, television is not the enemy but the friend of motion pictures. It will be the source of great profit to the industry. It will mean the loss of no more business than has come from the development of 16 millimeter films. It will mean the gain of tremendous business.

The belief and desire of every man to see pictures of joy and sorrow, and happiness and suffering, not alone but in the company of his fellowman, will prevail and continue. Television will act only as every other development that increases public interest in entertainment and amusement, to me the greatest entertainment business of all, that of motion pictures.

So, I might go on guessing and gazing into the crystal ball as to how television will affect your lives and mine. But unfortunately, I cannot yet pick up any television broadcasts from future days, so your guess is as good as mine.

You can rest assured that your life and mine, your business and mine, will be affected greatly. And believe me, we are very fortunate to be sitting in our grandstand seats in 1939 watching the development of this great art and this new industry.

Technical Aspects of Television

By ALLEN B. DUMONT

President of the Allen B. Dumont Laboratories

THE possibility of seeing events at places remote from the observer has been a dream of humanity for countless centuries. As early as 1880 specific proposals were made as to how this might be accomplished. Only meager results were obtained until around 1925, when Jenkins in America and Baird in England succeeded in transmitting low definition pictures. No major improvements were made by these experimenters but they made use of numerous technical advances that had taken place. Since that time further advances in technique and design have rendered high definition television a reality.

It might be well at this time to point out some of the more important contributions by various scientists and engineers which make the present system possible.

In tracing the development of television it must be remembered that every system of electric vision which has been proposed depends fundamentally upon certain physical changes which are produced by light. If the phenomenon known as photo-electricity were non-existent all television would be impossible and the possibility of television, therefore, may be said to date from the original discovery of the electro-chemical effect of light, by Becquerel, in 1839.



Part of the Conference Audience listening to the Television Broadcast

The chemical changes observed by Becquerel could be put to no practical use and it was not until 1873 that the first photo-electric effect of practical value was observed by a telegraph operator, named May, who was using some high resistances composed of the metal selenium.

May observed that his instruments behaved erratically whenever the sun shone on the resistances and the effect was traced to a decrease in the resistance of selenium when exposed to light. The announcement of this discovery led within a short time to speculation on the possibility of transmitting pictures, and scenes, to a distance by means of electricity, and within a few years a number of schemes were put forward. For various reasons, however, they were all impracticable at the time.

One of the earliest proposals of which details were published was put forward in 1880 by Ayrton and Perry. They proposed to use a transmitter consisting of a large screen made up of small squares of selenium

and to project an image of the scene to be transmitted onto this screen by means of a lens. Each square of selenium was to be connected with a separate wire to the corresponding point in the receiver where a magnet and light source was located. The magnet operated an aperture which allowed a varying amount of light to be passed through it, depending upon the light received on the selenium at the transmitter. Hence, by having a sufficient number of cells and light sources connected to each other a complete picture could be obtained. To obtain a picture of corresponding detail to the present 441-line picture over 3,000,000 cells, connecting wires and light sources would be necessary, so the reason for this scheme's failure is obvious.

Nipkow's patent of 1884 disclosed a method of scanning which employed a disc of large diameter near the periphery of which was a series of small holes arranged in the form of a spiral. The transmitter employed a selenium cell, the only practical

form of photo element known at that time. His receiver, however, employed an ingenious system of light modulation which depended on the property possessed by flint glass, of rotating the plane of polarization of light when situated in a magnetic field.

Although this system, because of the sluggishness of selenium and the lack of means of amplification, was too insensitive to give practical results, the basic idea of the scanning disc has been used extensively since.

The modern cathode ray tube used in television is a development of the Braun-Wehnelt tube which was in laboratory use at the beginning of the century. The effects produced by the discharge of electricity through a vacuum had been investigated since 1859, and the name "cathode ray" was given by Plucker to the discharge of electricity from the cathode of a vacuum tube when a high potential was applied to the anode.

It was later shown that this discharge produced fluorescence of the glass walls of the tube, due to bombardment of particles of electricity to which the name "electron" was given by Johnstone-Stoney in 1890.

In the Braun tube of 1897 the electron stream emitted from the cathode when a high potential was applied to the anode was directed up the tube and after passing through an aperture impinged on a mica screen coated with fluorescent material. The point of impact of the beam was thus made visible and by applying an external magnetic field the beam could be moved so as to fall on any point on the fluorescent screen.

In 1905 Wehnelt added an important improvement to the Braun tube by using a hot cathode—a strip of platinum coated with oxides and heated electrically to red heat. The increased electron emission obtained with this cathode enabled a much lower potential to be applied to the anode of the tube and gave a fluorescent spot of greater brilliance, at the same time greatly increasing the deflection sensitivity of the tube.

Up to this time no attempt had been made to reduce the spot on the screen to the smallest dimensions, although the advantage of such a refinement was understood. The early tubes had metal diaphragms which lim-

ited the section of the electron beam, but in 1902 Ryan showed that a magnetic coil surrounding the neck of the tube had a focusing action on the electron beam, and by varying both the position of the coil and the value of the current through it an exceedingly sharp spot could be obtained.

Another improvement was the insertion of a cylinder, or shield, surrounding the cathode called a Wehnelt cylinder, which, on applying a suitable negative potential acted as a pre-concentrator of the electron stream and directed it up to the tube in the form of a narrow jet.

In 1907, a patent was granted to Boris Rosing for a system of television in which a cathode ray tube was used as the receiver. Rosing's transmitting arrangements were similar to many others and used two mirror drums revolving at right angles to each other at widely different speeds to scan the image. The varying current impulses from the photo cell were transmitted to the receiver where they were caused to charge two condenser plates in the cathode ray tube.

The fluctuating charges on these plates caused the beam of electrons projected from the cathode to be deflected away from the aperture, and the amount of the beam which passed through the aperture was proportional to the potential of the plates and thus to the degree of light and shade in the original scene.

Having passed through the aperture the electron beam was caused to scan the surface of a fluorescent screen placed at the far end of the tube and so to reproduce the original image.

Successful results were never obtained with this scheme, partly on account of the crude forms of photo cells and cathode ray tubes then available, and partly on account of the lack of any means of amplification.

Shortly after this Campbell Swinton proposed a system of television utilizing two cathode ray tubes of appropriate design, one at the transmitter and one at the receiver, and in 1911 he described the system before the Roentgen Society.

It will be noticed that this system has almost no basic difference from the present



Delegates arriving at one of the Conference Sessions

electronic methods of pick-up and viewing.

Campbell Swinton conceived the idea of a mosaic screen of photo-electric elements which were to form a part of a special cathode ray tube. The image of the screen to be transmitted was to be projected on to the mosaic screen by means of a lens, and the back of the screen was to be scanned by a beam of cathode rays controlled magnetically by the currents from two alternating current generators. The cathode ray beam in the receiver was synchronized with that in the transmitter by means of deflecting coils connected by wires to the same generators as the transmitter, and a separate conductor carried the photo-electric currents for modulating the receiver beam.

In 1911 the three electrode amplifying tube of Lee DeForrest was practically unknown and hence this system was never tried. Our present television is only possible with the addition of this vastly important invention.

And so we jump to 1925 when Jenkins

in America and Baird in England, within a few months of each other, actually succeeded for the first time in transmitting crude pictures from a transmitter to a nearby receiver. Each had utilized many of the contributions previously enumerated which were essential for successful operation, and neither had added any basic new feature to make this possible.

From this time progress was more rapid, and although the bulk of the work done was on mechanical systems definite improvement was shown. Many scanning systems were tried utilizing devices such as the Nipkow disc, mirror disc, lens disc, mirror drum, lens drum, mirror screw, vibrating mirror, rocking prism, sliding prism, prism rings and many others.

In spite of all this, in 1931 the picture being transmitted consisted of only 60 lines at a speed of 20 pictures per second, which was entirely inadequate as regards detail and flicker. Furthermore, the defects of the mechanical systems had been made only

too apparent. Rapidly moving parts caused noise and difficulty of synchronization—bulky and costly apparatus, as well as excessive mechanical accuracy, caused experimenters to look for some other means of accomplishing the transmission of high definition pictures.

And so we take another jump to the present time when within a few months the start of regular scheduled programs of high quality is contemplated.

The systems now being used are entirely electronic and no mechanical moving parts are to be found at transmitter or receiver.

Again we can say that this has been accomplished by a gradual improvement in details rather than by any basic new invention. The scanning disc at the transmitter has been replaced by the photo-electric mosaic pick-up tube somewhat similar to that as originally proposed by Campbell Swinton in 1911, but with many refinements. The reforming of the picture at the receiver is accomplished by the cathode ray tube, a refinement of the Braun tube of 1897. These two tubes are the basis of our present electronic television systems.

Just how does our present apparatus function? The television camera is used to convert the variations of light and shade in an image in to corresponding electrical variations which can then be amplified and transmitted by radio or wire. It consists of a highly evacuated glass blank with a suitable window, a photo-electric mosaic screen and a neck containing an electron gun. As the electron beam passes through the neck of the tube it is deflected by two coils at right angles to each other. These coils are supplied with alternating currents of special wave form and frequency and cause the beam to scan the surface of the mosaic plate in a series of parallel lines.

A lens forms an image of the scene to be transmitted on to the mosaic screen. This screen consists of a thin sheet of insulating material covered on one side with a conductive metal coating which is generally referred to as the "signal plate" to which an electrical contact is made. On the side of the mica sheet towards the window and on which the picture is focused, a mosaic is formed of a large number of small sections

of silver, each being separate and insulated from its neighbors. The silver surface is then treated with caesium so that each element is photo-sensitive. When light falls upon the surface of the mosaic, each section liberates electrons in proportion to the light falling upon it. Furthermore, each element of the mosaic forms a minute condenser with the signal plate.

When an image of some object is focused on the mosaic screen, some of the elements will receive more light than others, depending on the brightness of the particular part of the image. Those mosaic elements on which a bright part of the image falls will liberate a large number of electrons and will thus become positively charged, while those elements in a completely dark part of the image will liberate no electrons and their charge will remain unchanged.

As the electron beam scans the surface of the mosaic elements, it restores sufficient electrons to each element to reduce its charge to zero. This discharge affects the signal plate by electrostatic induction and is conducted to the first amplifying tube. Hence, as the electron beam scans along each line and passes over parts of the image of varying brightness, a series of electrical impulses follow one another to the amplifier, which vary in the same way as the image brightness varies along the line. This is repeated line after line until the whole image has been scanned and the train of electrical impulses so produced is called the "video signal", which can be further amplified and used to modulate the transmitter.

At the receiver we use a cathode ray tube to reform the picture, similar to that just described except that instead of having the mosaic plate we use a fluorescent screen which is illuminated by the electron beam. Furthermore, we have an additional element in the electron gun called a "modulating electrode" to vary the intensity of the beam. Hence if we move the beam at the receiver by suitable means at the same speed as at the same time vary its intensity, we will reform the picture on the fluorescent screen.

There are numerous methods of synchronizing the motion of the beam at the transmitting and receiving tubes. The scanning voltages are generally of saw-tooth wave

form supplied by suitable generators. These generators may be located at both transmitting and receiving stations and locked in step by synchronizing impulses or the generators may be located only at the transmitter and the scanning voltages transmitted and used to scan at the receiver. The advantage of the second method is greater flexibility and reduced frequency requirement.

The pictures^m being transmitted at the present time have 441 lines, with a two to one interlace ratio, giving 30 pictures a second, with a flicker frequency of 60 per second. A number of wave bands, 6 megacycles wide, have been set aside for television transmissions. These bands are all located above 44 megacycles. Tests have shown that the coverage is from 50 to 75 miles with a properly located transmitter of sufficient power.

It is anticipated that continued improvement will be shown in this art towards increasing the range of transmissions, obtaining finer detail pictures of larger size and greater brilliance, as well as simplification of apparatus.

To predict the many uses of television several decades from now and its effect upon our civilization is truly the job of a superman, and so I leave the subject to your individual consideration.

At the conclusion of the broadcast address Mr. Dumont continued with a demonstration, explaining as follows:

IN order to accomplish the clarification of some points which are hazy as to how this television operates, we have here some apparatus which we have brought in so that some of the points that may not be clear to you can be shown in the demonstration.

The apparatus that you see on the piano here consists of a very small test transmitter with a fixed picture in it. The other box contains the apparatus for the receiver. Now, of course, this is in its very simplified form. This particular apparatus is used mainly in demonstrating the principles of television but it shows quite clearly just what goes on.

We will adjust that so that we have just a single spot. We see the spot caused by

the beam of electrons. In other words, we have inside the unit a cathode ray tube which you can probably see better in this apparatus that is in back of me. In other words, you can see the shape of the cathode ray tube. The beam of electrons hits the end of the tube and causes the fluorescent spot. We can move that spot horizontally or vertically. If we move that fast enough horizontally and vertically we will have what we call a scanning pattern, and still that one spot just moving rapidly covers the entire screen.

Now, if we take the signal from the signal plate and modulate the modulating electrode, we will see the picture on the end of this tube. Of course, this is a small tube here and I do not know how well the beam back there can be seen by those of you in the rear. We can see how the number of lines affects the detail in the picture. If we cut down the number of lines we see that the detail of the picture is considerably reduced. If we increase it, it is considerably increased. We can change this number of pictures per second. If we have very few pictures a second we have a lot of flicker, as we increase that the flicker becomes less and we have this here.

Now, over here we have a little transmitter, one which transmits the sound and another which transmits the picture. This transmits on the same frequencies that are used in television, namely, around 5 meters. This that you see here is a small table model receiver. The detail on these pictures is really not as good as you get in actual service, but it is difficult to bring elaborate apparatus into the studio and set it up in the time that is available. It will show the picture transmitted from the transmitter to the receiver and it gives you a little idea of how the picture looks.

Replies made by Mr. Griffis and Mr. Dumont to questions from the floor.

1. *How can I have television in my home, and how much will it cost me?*

THE cost of television receivers for the home will vary considerably. The lower priced sets may be as low as \$100, and the more expensive sets will run up to

\$1,000. The main difference in cost is due to the size of the picture that you desire in your home. The inexpensive sets will have a relatively small picture and probably will only be equipped to receive the picture. The sound portion must be received on these very inexpensive sets by utilizing a convertor in connection with your present receiver. On the slightly more expensive sets sound and voice will be received by the one receiver. And on the real expensive sets, all-wave radio set and possibly a phonograph may be combined in the apparatus.

2. *What is the size of the picture?*

The picture that you see here is 8 x 10 inches. That is the actual size of the picture. It is rather deceiving in here. These receivers are designed for the home where there will be six, eight and ten people looking at it. If you get in a dark room and then sit about six feet away from the picture you will have the same angle as if you were in the motion picture theatre. So that if the room is dark after a short period of time you will think you are in the movies. The picture appears just as large as if you were sitting in the middle of a motion picture house.

3. *What was the origin of that picture there in that portable model?*

In order to obviate the necessity of bringing an ordinary camera in here, which would require additional lights and additional apparatus for all of our test work, we have what we call a phosmojector tube which has the picture right inside the tube. We scan the picture in that particular tube directly. In other words, it is a fixed picture we are using. It saves bringing in a large camera with floodlights and everything else.

If we wanted to pick up this audience here, we would take this tube out, put in the photo-electric mosaic tube and use the floodlights. We need more amplification than we can conveniently get in here.

4. *Mr. Dumont, I would like to ask this: We are all here together and want to know about television. Most of us are interested in the pictures. How will backgrounds be used in televising? That is, we know that on the screen today we see, for instance, people standing on the deck of a ship and in the*

background we have the ocean, and some tropical islands, and so forth. Will that be used in television?

That can very readily be used in television presentations. There are several ways of doing it. I know very little about the motion pictures, but I understand that some of those shots are made using a projector of some sort on to a ground glass screen. The person simply stands in front of that.

The same principle can be applied, of course, in picking up a television program. You can use the same procedure.

Now, it is also possible to do it electrically. In other words, we use two pick-up devices and we would simply fade in electrically one on top of the other. We can either do it electrically or optically.

In other words, if we had an actor doing a love scene, we will say, on the Beach of Waikiki, we could have him in the studio if we wanted, and for the beach, we would take the televised background and fade it in.

5. *Perhaps Mr. Dumont might be willing to comment as to the general interest in this subject. There has been so much in magazines and newspapers and articles of all sorts, might I ask whether most issues have been settled and necessary adjustments made to promote the general use of it?*

As far as I know, so far there has been practically no television litigation whatsoever. Whether it is going to come like it did in radio, nobody knows.

What are the reports so far?

So far, to my knowledge, there has been no litigation on television patents. Naturally, in the Patent Office there are interferences that are granted, but of course nobody knows about that. That is more or less standard procedure.

There are different kinds of basic patents?

There are undoubtedly a large number of inventors that think they have so-called basic patents. It is personal opinion as to which one of these parties are predominant.

6. *What is the production price of a receiver like the one indicated? What would be the cost of the replacement of the cathode tube such as indicated, and how long could such a receiver justify being marketed?*

I think this particular receiver that you

see here had a price on it somewhere between \$350 and \$400. As to how long it will remain so-called modern, as far as I know there is no reason why it should not serve a person five or ten years anyway. As far as the life of the tube is concerned, the cathode ray tube will last from two to four years. The replacement cost on that is between \$40 and \$50.

7. *Do you know what type of picture we are going to be able to get? Who will broadcast? Will it be advertisers, or what?*

Well, I think I had better talk about the programs that have been transmitted in the past six months. NBC from the Empire State Building has done the bulk of the transmissions. Columbia Broadcasting System expect to have their transmitter operating in a few months, and we are putting up a transmitter and will have it operating probably within a month.

The programs that NBC have transmitted from the Empire State Building have consisted of news, ordinary motion picture news reels, March of Time, short comedies and two or three feature pictures. They have also transmitted a number of vaudeville acts of all descriptions. They have transmitted a number of plays of various nature and they have also picked up experimentally outside sporting events with no official programs on that. In other words, they have taken their pick-up trucks out and scanned different scenes on the outside. They have had a few sidewalk pick-ups where they have brought the persons before the microphone and had them interviewed at that time.

So far we haven't arrived at the point where we have commercial sponsors. I think that most of the people feel that it may work out that television, the broadcasting of it, may be partially, or to a large extent, maintained by the advertisers. However, as I say, there isn't anything definite on that and it remains to be seen how it works out.

8. *Do you think it likely we are going to get the Olympic Games in 1940, and has the Olympic Committee done anything about it?*

I have heard that question before. If they would hold the Games a little closer to home—I understand it is Finland—we could do it very nicely. At the present time I think it is somewhat impractical to try to transmit it to this country because of the somewhat limited range of the broadcasting and also because there are no cables which would be suitable to carry it. So I will be willing to bet anything that we will not see those games, except through the film pick-up and retransmission.

9. *What is the range of television?*

The range of a television transmitter is between 50 and 75 miles at the present time. A number of schemes are being worked on which look very promising that can extend that range.

It might be mentioned at this time that the actual service range of a large number of broadcasting stations is not a lot greater than that. By that I mean that is a service that you can receive every day in the year, regardless of atmospheric conditions and very perfect reception. Of course, you can receive stations hundreds of miles away under good conditions, but I think everybody in this audience realizes that pretty much they use their local stations because that is where they can rely on getting programs of good quality consistently. So that the actual range of a broadcasting station is not so much different as most people think.

10. *There is no question that we can look forward to the possibility of having network televising stations, is that correct?*

I think that, eventually, yes, but for a long period of time until the actual cables are developed and installed you are going to have individual transmissions and not network transmissions.

I realize that. I mean, in time we will have a key station, shall we call it, which will pipe through the programs just as the radio programs are piped through today?

I think undoubtedly in the distant future.

11. *I want to know if the volume of sound affects the distinctness of a picture?*

(Continued on page 17)

"Charles Laughton and I"

FOR those who have seen the masterly mixture of arrogance and servility that is Charles Laughton in his newest production *The Beachcomber**, it is highly interesting to read his wife's recent book "Charles Laughton and I" (Harcourt Brace, \$3.50) and remind oneself of the astonishing variety of characters he has portrayed on screen and stage. In fact his life has been one long struggle to obtain such variety; to hold out against all offers, no matter how lucrative, that propose his repeating one of the many parts in which he has been a popular success. This strength of mind, coupled with first-class ability and training, has undoubtedly been the chief cause of his success and popularity. As Nero, Ginger Ted, Henry VIII, Ruggles, Tattle in Congreve's *Love for Love*, Canon Chasuble in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Rembrandt, and numerous other characters of every time and place, he has proved himself one of the greatest character actors of his day.

As is so often the case we find the peak of success resting firmly on a foundation of interest and determination in childhood. Laughton's parents were hotel owners; when their son saw a pretty lady walking past their hotel and asked who she was, the answer came from his mother with a good deal of embarrassment: "Hush, dear, that's a theatrical. . . ." To the mother and father the idea of Charles being a stage success was unthinkable, and they carefully planned a very different career for him. After deciding in his early years that the Navy was his place, they switched their choice in favor of hotel management and resolved to train him to follow in their footsteps.

But Laughton himself thought very differently. To him a "theatrical" was something miraculous, and from the first he planned his life in direct opposition to his parents' ambitions. He built himself a model theatre as a kid and had all the heads of his marionettes bitten off by his enraged brother; he induced an admiring pantry-maid to sacrifice her free afternoons to watching him act in costumes of old sheets



Charles Laughton when his parents were considering the Navy as a career for him.

and towels. Not until his schooldays, however, did he receive any official recognition. Then he played the appropriate part of a lodging-house keeper in a school production and the dramatic critic of the school magazine provided him with his first press notice. "We hope to see some more of Mr. Laughton," he wrote.

With her husband-to-be engaged in disappointing his parents, Elsa Lanchester was undergoing far more peculiar treatment. Raised in one of the poorer sections of London she fancied herself "in a mist of gauze or chiffon" and attended free dancing classes in Chelsea. There she was picked up by a talent scout and turned over to one of the strangest personalities of the time, Isadora Duncan, who took her with a group of other child prodigies to the Duncan school of dancing in Paris. Once a little genius had been chosen by Isadora, all tuition costs and living expenses ceased to be a problem, thanks to the forethought of a kindly old millionaire. Every morning the children were lined up in a huge salon and, much to little Elsa's disgust, went reverently through a rite of kissing Miss Duncan's hand while she reclined gracefully on a sofa, wreathed in veils and shod with gold sandals. They

* Reviewed December, 1938.



Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester in "Henry the Eighth"

were taken to a window and told to watch the leaves and rose-petals falling and emulate the actions in their dances. When the world war scattered the colony of little geniuses, Elsa Lanchester had few regrets. "Bare feet", she writes, "are not naughty any more and nobody can make a living to-day by imitating rose petals, unless it is Sally Rand without her fan."

With the end of the war she was a dance instructress and breaking into professional acting. Laughton came in for the last year of the war and then turned his attention to business in the family hotel. But at the same time he joined up with a group of amateur players, and it wasn't long before the decision to break with the hotel business was made. Laughton left home and entered the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, "where thinking about acting ceased to be a crime and became a cardinal virtue." In one year he carried off the highest award the Academy could present. It was then that Bernard Shaw told him he

was bound to be a success. "A hopeless Higgins," said Mr. Shaw when Laughton played that part in *Pygmalion*, "but a born comedian".

When he married Elsa Lanchester, Laughton was already well on the way to success. They met in Arnold Bennett's play *Mr. Prohack*, where Laughton got into hot water for basing his portrait of Mr. Prohack on Bennett himself. "Although as the rehearsals continued this became obvious to everyone, Bennett didn't get it at all. He didn't approve of Charles' rendering of the part and more than once he shouted from the stalls during rehearsals: 'Not a bit like him. That's not my Prohack.' On the first night Charles made himself up to look like Arnold Bennett. He copied his hair and moustache, but even then Bennett didn't notice the resemblance, but the newspapers did—and liked it." Next morning Laughton spent an uncomfortable few minutes on the telephone listening to a

livid Bennett bawling him out for a "piece of gross impertinence".

Since that day Elsa Lanchester has played as varied a collection of parts as her husband. But this kind of acting, she points out, brings comparatively little fame to a woman. The Laughtons, Bours and Arlisses can go on almost indefinitely interpreting the most devious parts, but there is practically no such thing as a film actress who has won fame because of the variety of characters she has interpreted. The actress is typed as a certain personality, and thereafter repeats that personality ad infinitum. Merle Oberon, says Miss Lanchester, had to weep in *Henry VIII*, and since then she has never been allowed to dry her eyes. But she has also become a famous star, popular with vast numbers of movie-goers, while Elsa Lanchester who, on her own admission, has played "everything from addled spinsters to Peter Pan" has had to pay the price.

"Charles Laughton and I" takes the reader up to the time of the founding of the Mayflower Company which is run by Laughton and Erich Pommer. Since its publication Elsa Lanchester has been in New York for the opening of Mayflower's first production, *The Beachcomber*, and, in an interview, touched on a number of points of interest.

First, she is highly enthusiastic about Laughton's next picture, *St. Martin's Lane*, which has already been released in England. Before it comes to the United States it will have to be re-dubbed, since American distributors are chary of handling a film with a lot of foreign dialects in it. This is a sore point with Elsa Lanchester. "Many of the American critics," she says, "have insisted in the past that British companies should turn out really British films if they want success in the American market. There has been a lot of talk about the need for English pictures with roots in their own soil. But no sooner do we make a picture that is really English, like *St. Martin's Lane*, than we are told the dialogue must be changed to suit American audiences." Miss Lanchester believes in fair exchange. "In England", she says, "we have learnt to understand the language in a picture like *Dead End*. It is

only fair that American audiences should learn a strange dialect in the same way."

For the future, she says, Laughton will star in one more picture after *St. Martin's Lane*. This will be *Jamaica Inn*, now being completed in the Mayflower studios with Alfred Hitchcock directing. After that he would like to work on productions in which he is not the star. He also has ideas for a stage production of *King Lear*, Lear being a part he feels has never been really interpreted by an actor, and one that requires a full year of study. He would like his wife to play Cordelia, and would prefer to open the play in the United States, "where we're not so well known as husband and wife" explains Miss Lanchester.

Both believe that no actor can play the lead in *King Lear* evening after evening with matinees thrown in and still bring his full powers to bear upon this exhausting role. So they'll try and show it only four times a week, alternating with *The Tempest*, in which Elsa Lanchester will play Ariel. We say "will play" but maybe that's looking too far ahead: at the moment neither of the Laughtons is in a position to know exactly what they will be doing this year, and while scripts are being considered for future Mayflower productions, no announcements are available as to what will follow *Jamaica Inn*.—N. D.

(Continued from page 2)

Original screen story by Philip MacDonald and Norman Foster. Directed by Norman Foster. The Japanese detective foils a plot to blow up French battleships in Near-Eastern waters. Picturesque setting and action. 20th Century-Fox.

m PERSONS IN HIDING—Lynne Overman, Patricia Morison, J. Carrol Naish. Original screen story by J. Edgar Hoover. Directed by Louis King. A gangster picture with a pretty girl as the brains of the outfit. Interesting as it shows the working of the bureau of Federal Investigation. Paramount.

f ST. LOUIS BLUES—Dorothy Lamour, Lloyd Nolan. Based on story by Eleanor Griffin and William Rankin. Directed by Raoul Walsh. A story of a show-boat blending comedy, romance and melodrama. A girl runs away from her former manager who has exploited her, and joins the show-boat troupe. Some good music. Paramount.

(Continued on page 19)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Reunion in War-time

MR. MUSSOLINI'S feelings have been shown a gesture of respect by making Esperanto the language spoken by the natives of the winter-resort place where the next war breaks out in *Idiot's Delight*, when not broken English. Not that many people will notice—it sounds enough like Italian to be only a technical camouflage. Otherwise the changes made in Robert Sherwood's play that won the Pulitzer Prize, in putting it on the screen, are neither so cringing nor so devastating as preliminary rumors suggested. It is still sufficiently obvious where and under what general circumstances a frightful modern super-war comes crashing down on a lot of harmless, peace-loving people, wrenching them out of their simple individual ways of living into a maelstrom of international chaos. Only the emphasis has been changed, the interest thrown from a group to two people of that group, the tone shifted from ironic tragedy to comedy, and the meaning of the title left so hanging in the air that most people, if they think about it at all, are likely to take "idiot's delight" to be an obscurish reference, not to war-making, but to Mr. Gable's romantic interest in Miss Shearer.

No one is going to find these changes particularly deplorable except those who took Mr. Sherwood's play to be an incisive and effective protest against war and expected the film made from it to be the same. Such people should remember that no film of any considerable popular appeal, no matter how many war-horrors it may have shown,

has ever been appreciably effective anti-war propaganda. War on the screen, no matter how horrible and tragic it is made to appear, is such a thrilling affair, so complete an escape from the routine of ordinary life, that the stronger the emotions it excites the more those emotions are likely to be admiration for courage and pity for suffering rather than indignation against the forces that provided the occasion for that courage and suffering. According to quite an old theory which time has not disproved, pity and terror, whether in Aristotle's theatre or the modern movie house, are more purgative than dynamic, and Mr. Sherwood's war, for all practical purposes, loses little by being a mere background for an unusual and very entertaining love-story.

It's entertaining because it is unusual, and carried off jauntily and gaily by Clark Gable's remarkably infectious and effective performance. It concerns two people of no great romantic stature who first come together in a cheap vaudeville theatre, he the rather shabby but irrepressible assistant in a dubious mind-reading act, she a day-dreaming acrobat who believes, and believes very efficaciously, that she can become glamorous by resolutely pretending to be glamorous. That the glamor she dreams of and eventually achieves is more than slightly tawdry is touching more than offensive: one can see through her phoniness, as the man insistently did, and still be interested and charmed by it. In the course of time he arrives at touring Europe with six blondes, a song-and-dance artist purveying Irving Berlin wherever he can find engagements, and meets once more the girl he had

run into so intimately but casually in Omaha, now a slinkish, Garboesque exotic creature with a pulp-magazine background of Russian aristocracy and an amazing blonde wig. There war overtakes them: it may destroy them, but it brings them together, made for each other with their inextinguishable enthusiasm for triumphs amid tinsel and bright lights, enthusiastically planning a career that will take them to Piccadilly though bombs are crashing all around them.

Forget Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontane—most people who see the film won't have seen them anyway—and this picture is its own excuse for being, nearly always amusing, sometimes touching, with plenty of acid comment on modern life and society tucked away in it but not aimed point-blank at you like the firstlies and secondlies of a sermon. Clark Gable keeps it on a level of high comedy, and Norma Shearer—well, if she seems phoney it will not be too phoney for comfort if you remember that that was what she was meant to be.

The other people—Laura Hope Crews, Charles Coburn, Burgess Meredith, Joseph Schildkraut—are all good, especially Les Blondes, but they all inevitably get overshadowed, along with their significance, in the process of making the two star parts really star parts. But they are still in the picture, with their different meanings, for those to whom the stars are not too dazzling.

J. S. H.

Out of Kipling

BEN HECHT and Charles MacArthur seem to have had a pleasant afternoon—maybe it went on into the evening—tossing off an adventure film about Kipling's water-boy, Gunga Din. With vaguely fond memories of *Soldiers Three* and *Thuggee* (which the actors call *tugee* on the screen, no doubt lest it be confused with something more American), and even *My Lord the Elephant*, they have let themselves go and concocted a lively and two-thirds exciting action piece celebrating, not too solemnly, some of Britain's ways with the natives of India. Following their own

errant fancies they have skipped lightly from melodrama to slapstick to sentiment to genuine thrills mingled with theatrical heroics, sticking to only one discernably resolute aim, to break conspicuously away from the conventional boy-and-girl theme: the girl is quite brutally abandoned by her fiancé for the presumably greater pleasures of life in Her or His Majesty's Service.

George Stevens has taken this gaily irresponsible script and directed it for all it's worth, and made an excellent job of it. The glories of the old days when movies moved instead of talking are here notably revived, and you'll wait a long time before you see anything on the screen more satisfying in its way than the expedition of the three sergeants to repair the broken telegraph line at the beginning, or the rescue of these same three sergeants from the diabolical natives fanatically addicted to murder by means of strangling. The bhisti, Gunga Din, appears only intermittently for all his title role, but he has the final big moment, with Kipling in person there to dash off his poem about him, and a gorgeous fade-out, grinning like Topsy in his posthumous corporal's uniform.

Everybody concerned with putting *Gunga Din* on the screen did his technical best (including a remarkably good composer of the musical score), and to excellent effect. If as a whole it can't be taken very seriously it's because its authors seem to have been indulging in a little swing session on Kipling themes, improvising with more gusto than intention, with really nothing to say.

J. S. H.

(Continued from page 12)

I mean if we have the voice very loud does that make the picture more distinct?

No. On the television receiver you have a separate control so that you can adjust the contrast. There is the on and off switch which turns everything on or off. Then you have the brightness control so that you can regulate the brightness of the picture and the focus control so that you can focus it. Then another control for the contrast of the picture and another for the sound volume so you can regulate the sound volume and the contrast of the picture independently.

One Third of a Nation

This review is by Langdon Post, of the Board's Executive Committee who expresses the opinion of an expert on the problem of tenement housing conditions.

"I see one third of a nation ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed." This was the challenge laid down by Franklin Roosevelt in his second inaugural address. This is the challenge to American democracy today. The simple tragic truth contained in those few words constitutes the basic problem of this nation as we approach the halfway mark of the twentieth century. It has been repeated over and over again in the home, in the forum, in the debating halls, in legislatures and in political platforms. It has inundated our literature, our art and our drama. It confounds our economists, confuses our law makers and strikes fear into millions of our homes. Being a simple catholic truth it is the essence of drama. That people should be ill-clothed, ill-fed and ill-housed in a nation which is productively capable of supplying all the necessities of life is a paradox containing within itself all the elements dear to the heart of author or producer.

About a year ago the Federal Theatre Project of the Works Progress Administration presented a play called *One Third of a Nation*. It ran to standing room only for many weeks. Its story was acclaimed by the critics as one of the most dramatic of that season—and yet it was merely the story of a house, of an old law tenement house in one of the slums of New York; a vicious cruel and tragic story of life and death and misery, of indifference, greed and profit. It was a tremendously dramatic presentation of how and why one-third of a nation came to be ill-housed.

Dudley Murphy, an independent and courageous motion picture producer, saw the cinematic possibilities in this play, filmed it entirely in New York City and presented it to a highly appreciative public a week or so ago.

Mr. Murphy, evidently believing that the stark simplicity of the story in the play would not be sufficient for the average movie audience throughout the country, felt im-

pelled to introduce a more conventional method of presentation using the story of the house as a background. I believe Mr. Murphy's decision was a wise one and although I would like to think that the whole technique used in the play could have been translated into the movie, I nevertheless can find no quarrel with the final result.

The story itself is simple enough. A rich young man, much of whose inherited wealth is derived from the slums of New York, meets a charming young slum dweller at a fire in one of his own firetraps in which she had been living. Several people are burned to death and the brother of the girl is crippled for life as the result of the collapse of a defective fire escape ladder. The young man, played by Lief Erikson, entirely ignorant of the sordid sources of a large part of his wealth, is deeply impressed by his first encounter with them—and, incidentally of course, with his charming young tenant, played by Sylvia Sidney. Goaded on by the tragedy of the fire and the exhortations of Miss Sidney whose soul is gradually shrivelling under the impact of slum life, he tries to find an answer to the question of what he should do. Tear them down is the obvious one, but he is unable to extricate himself from the arguments of his pretty sister, who enjoys their wealth and is not interested in its source, and his hard bitten family lawyer whose bitter logic seems unanswerable. He finally gives up in despair and it is not until the second fire in the house, caused by the embittered crippled brother, that the wealthy young man throws arguments to the wind and begins a wholesale demolition of his slum properties.

It is not the strength of the story nor the effectiveness of the acting, most of which is excellent, that makes this the fine picture it is. The background and its effect upon the characters in the picture make *One Third of a Nation* a fine production. The struggle of the young man between his desires and the traditions of the past and the indifference of the present, the reactions of the young radical embittered by the injustices of slum life and its contrast to the life of the rich, the crippled boy's hallucinations of the dirty old house talking

and sneering at him, the whole atmosphere of slum life created with such accuracy and integrity, these are the things that step this picture up into the front rank of productions.

Some will call it propaganda. If dealing honestly, sincerely and dramatically with the facts and the truths of life is propaganda, let us have more of it.

Distributed by Paramount Pictures, Inc.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 15)

- f **SMILING ALONG**—Gracie Fields, Roger Livesey. Original screen story by William Counselman. Directed by Monty Banks. A gay sort of story about a stranded variety troupe in England. Gracie Fields is a distinctive and likeable comedienne, who fills a rather ordinary story with vitality. (British Production). 20th Century-Fox.
- m **SON OF FRANKENSTEIN**—Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi. Original screen story by Willis Cooper. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. A real horror story and entertaining to those who like this type. Frankenstein's son in order to prove his father's greatness brings the monster back to life with dire results. The acting and direction are both good. Universal.
- f **THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL**—John Garfield, Gloria Dickson, Dead End Kids. Novel by Bertram Millhauser and Beulah Marie Dix. Directed by Busby Berkley. The story of a hard-boiled prize-fighter who, fleeing from treacherous hangers-on who have involved him in a murder, learns about love and loyalty on a western ranch. Both toughness and sentiment in it, and John Garfield amply justifying his star billing. The Dead End Kids are not criminals. Warner Bros.

SHORT SUBJECTS

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj **BEACH PICNIC** (Walt Disney)—Donald Duck has trouble with the ants at his picnic. RKO Radio.
- fj **DOG-GONE MODERN**—A cartoon of two dogs visiting a model modern house. Vitaphone.
- fj **FROZEN FEET** (Terry Toon)—Amusing cartoon of a man who is sent to paint the North Pole. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj **I'M JUST A JITTERBUG**—Amusing cartoon in which characters dance and sing. Universal.
- f **LONE MOUNTIE, THE**—A Krazy Kat cartoon, in which he blossoms out from a timid waiter to a successful mountie. Columbia.
- f **LONE STRANGER AND PORKY, THE**—One of Vitaphone's very clever and amusing burlesque cartoons. Vitaphone.
- fj **MICE WILL PLAY, THE**—An amusing cartoon of mice in a laboratory. Vitaphone.
- f **OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT, THE**—An amusing color cartoon, founded on the Edward Lear poem with modern trimmings. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **RETUNIA NATURAL PARK**—A Captain and the Kids Cartoon, amusing burlesque of tourists in a national park. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- MUSICALS, NOVELTIES AND SERIALS
- f **COMMUNITY SING NO. 3** (3rd Series)—A good collection of old songs. Columbia.
- f **COMMUNITY SING NO. 4** (3rd Series)—Singing the old songs. Columbia.
- f **MUSIC THROUGH THE YEARS**—The singing of the most popular song of the year for the last ten years with Jan Garber and his orchestra. Paramount.
- f **SAMOVAR SERENADE**—Russian singing and dancing. RKO Radio.
- fj **SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE NO. 9** (Serial) Nos. 9-12—Jackie Cooper, David Durand, Bill Codey, Jr. Directed by Ray Taylor. The end of the Scouts' adventures. Universal.
- fj **SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 4**—Much more interesting than the average of this series, dealing with football among the screen stars—from Nick Foran's baby son to grown-ups—including stars who were formerly famous football men. Columbia.
- f **TROPICAL TROPICS** (Nu-Atlas Productions)—Singing and dancing. RKO Radio.
- INFORMATIONALS
- fj **ANCIENT EGYPT**—A Fitzpatrick Traveltalk, in color, and an interesting one. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **BLUE GRASS** (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Showing the training of thoroughbreds. "Man of War" at the age of 22 and the race between his two offsprings "War Admiral" and "Sea Biscuit." A good picture for horse lovers. RKO Radio.
- fj **BOW STRING**—About archery, with some remarkable exhibitions of it. RKO Radio.
- fj ***DOUBLE DIVING** (Pete Smith Specialty)—Marvelous pictures of Dutch Smith and Farid Tamaka in simultaneous diving feats. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f ***GREAT HEART, THE** (MGM Miniatures)—A record of the heroic work of Father Damien among the lepers. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **KING VULTURE** (Special Sport Thrills)—The filming of a daring raid on a vulture's nest. Columbia.
- f **LAND OF INCA MEMORIES** (Color Cruises)—A journey to South America to visit the land of the Inca Indians. Done in color. Paramount.
- fj ***LINCOLN IN THE WHITE HOUSE**—In color; a fine brief record of Lincoln from his first days as President up to his Gettysburg speech. Vita.
- f ***MARCH OF TIME, THE, NO. 6** (5th Series)—"The State of the Nation 1939". An excellent issue showing what the New Deal has done for the country after the depression. Shows the working of the Fortune Survey. RKO Radio.
- fj **MEXICO**—Travelogue in color. Paramount.
- fj **NEW ROADWAYS**—John Nesbitt's "Passing Parade," devoted to small but far-reaching items of news. There is a particularly interesting section showing experiments in feeding white mice to increase their intelligence. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **NEWSREEL** (Reelisms)—An interesting picture showing the making of a newsreel from start to finish, from the giving of assignments to shipping the prints to all parts of the world. RKO Radio.
- f **ON THE WING** (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Wild geese on the wing and shooting them, some nice hunting dogs. RKO Radio.
- fj **PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 3**—Oddities of the Pacific Ocean; a beautiful mountain sunrise in color; capturing an African elephant. Paramount.
- fj **PILOT BOAT**—How New York Harbor pilots are trained. RKO Radio.
- f **SHOOTING FOR PAR** (Ed Thorgenson Sports)—A Sports Review, showing famous golfers like Sam Snead and Patty Borg. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 4**—Strange occupations such as getting out a special edition of the London Times every day for the King; making flowers out of feathers; a man's hobby of saving string; the art of makeup; etc. Paramount.
- f **WASHINGTON PARADE, THE No. 1**—A patriotic survey of the capital and its many activities. Columbia.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) 25c
Special Film Lists 10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status free

National Board of Review—How It Works free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils 10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

fj *ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, THE—Mickey Rooney, Walter Connolly, Tex Ingram. Novel by Mark Twain. Directed by Richard Thorpe. A vivid series of Huck Finn's adventures in his trip down the Mississippi with Jim, the runaway slave. Many of the characters from Mark Twain's classic comes splendidly to life on the screen, though Huck is given more conscience than his author endowed him with. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m *AMPHITRYON — Henry Garat, Jeanne Boitel. Screenplay by Albert Valetin, from the mythology. Directed by Albert Valentin. A highly amusing screen version of the troubles of Jupiter when he fell in love with the beautiful mortal, Alcemene, and visited the earth to woo her disguised as her husband Amphitryon. Excellent acting by the lead stars and supporting cast and full of funny and complicated situations. In French with English subtitles. Globe Distributing Co.

m BEAUTY FOR THE ASKING—Lucille Ball. Based on story by Grace Martin and Adele Buffington. Directed by Glenn Tryon. Light and amusing with more of an appeal for women than men, it being a story of a girl who has a formula for face cream and makes her fortune. RKO Radio.

m BLACKWELL'S ISLAND—John Garfield, Stanley Fields, Rosemary Lane. Original screen story by Crane Wilbur and Lee Katz. Directed by William McGann. A rather slam-bang stirring up of the old graft scandals at what used to be Blackwell's Island, energetic in its action and humor. Warner Bros.

f CAFE SOCIETY—Madeleine Carroll, Fred MacMurray, Shirley Ross. Based on an original story by Virginia Van Upp. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. A light and amusing story of a society girl who seeks thrills and publicity, which get her into constant trouble. Well acted and produced. Paramount.

f CODE OF THE STREETS—Harry Carey, Frankie Thomas, The "Little Tough Guys". Original story by Arthur T. Herman. Directed by Harold Young. A story of a police officer's small son who joins the tough gang on Front Street to help catch a murderer to save the man who has been unjustly convicted of the crime. Universal.

f *CRISIS—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. p. 21.

f EVERYBODY'S BABY—The Jones Family. Original screen story by Hilda Stone and Betty Reinhardt. Directed by Malcolm St. Clair. The first grandchild in the Jones family starts an amusing feud between two schools of theory about the care of infants—the old-fashioned and new-fangled. 20th Century-Fox.

f FAST AND LOOSE—Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell, Reginald Owen. Original screen story by Harry Kurnitz. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. The husband and wife of "Fast Company" solve another murder mystery. A gay and lively tale, with a good cast carrying the whole thing off in spirited fashion. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f FORGED PASSPORT—Paul Kelly, June Lang. Original screen story by James R. Webb and Lee Loeb. Directed by John H. Auer. A story of the United States immigration service. Discharged from his post as immigration inspector, a young man joins up with the crooks who are smuggling people across the border, and traps them, also catching the man who had murdered one of his fellow workers. Republic.

f HONOLULU—Robert Young, Eleanor Powell, Burns and Allen. Original story by Herbert Fields and Frank Partos. Directed by Edward Buzzell. A farce with dancing and singing, about a man and his double, one of them a movie star trying to get a vacation free from autograph hunters. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f KING OF THE TURF—Adolphe Menjou, Roger Daniel, Dolores Costello. Original screen story by George Bruce. Directed by Alfred E. Green. An exciting and moving racetrack story, about a jockey who makes a man of a broken-down bum (familiar plot but made plausible by excellent characterizations) and how the boy was cured of his interest in horse-racing. United Artists.

(Continued on page 25)

MAR 24 1939

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Introduction to This Issue

THE work of many individuals goes into the making of the finished motion picture seen on the screen. There is an understandable curiosity on the part of the motion picture public to know something about the specialized work of these individuals and the methods used by them in the many procedures of film production. It was in answer to this that certain sessions of the recent National Board Annual Conference were devoted to the subject "The Making of a Motion Picture." Authorative speakers in eight of the different branches of motion picture making addressed the Conference and in response to the many requests made by those at the Conference and others, who were unable to attend but interested in the talks, we are publishing them in the Magazine.

This month we give you the first three on "The Making of a Motion Picture," to follow the continuity from writing to completed picture, and others will follow next month.

We present also another talk by an authority in the motion picture industry,

though not in the field of production in the likewise important field of distribution. It is that delivered by Mr. Howard Dietz, Director of Advertising and Publicity of Metro Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Corp., at the annual Luncheon session of the Conference.

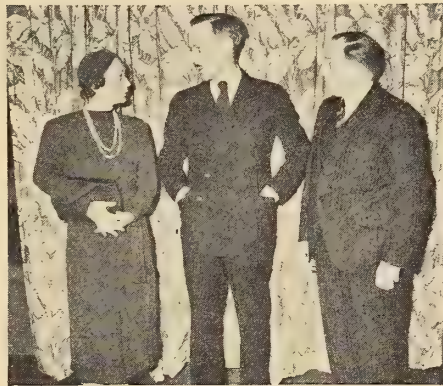
Other talks to follow in future issues will be those of Mr. Louis de Rochemont, producer and publisher of the *March of Time*, given at the Luncheon; Professor Sawyer Falk, Dramatic Activities, Civic University Theatre, Syracuse University, made at the New York University session of the Conference; Mr. Jean H. Lenauer, Manager of the Filmarte Theatre, N. Y. C., in connection with the special showing of the internationally outstanding film of 1938 *Grand Illusion*.

Reportings from the community activities

panel are to be given in issues to come.

The junior session has been reported in the February 4-Star Final, a copy of which will be sent to those delegates requesting it.

*The Conference address delivered by Miss Robertson is on page 16 that of Mr. Hendee on page 13. Dr. Potter, Division of Film Study, Columbia University, was presiding officer at the session.



Miss Marian Robertson, Dr. Russell Potter and Mr. Harold Hendee at the Conference of the National Board*

March 1939 marks the Thirtieth Anniversary of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, organized March 1909

The Making of a Scenario

By DUDLEY NICHOLS

Mr. Nichols is on the Board of Directors of the Screen Writers Guild and was its president for two years. He wrote the scenario for "The Informer," chosen by the Board as the best film of its year. He is author of the screenplay for "Stagecoach" reviewed in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of this Magazine.

FIRST, I suppose, it would be most interesting to you to know how we work.

I had made a note that there were two ways of making a scenario. I am glad that the program says, "The Making of a Scenario." It is not written; it is made.

A motion picture is the result of a united effort of many people. A scenario is the blueprint of a film rather than a written work. It is true that it takes skill as a writer to write the dialogue, just as it takes skill as an engineer, as a constructionist to see the whole structure, the dramatic structure, to see the flow of images.

A director comes in like a contractor, takes the blueprints, adds ideas of his own and creates the final job, assisted by the composer who writes the score, by the set designer, by the cast, by the casting director, all the facilities of a studio. And the right way of making a motion picture and writing a scenario is for all of those people to work together directly.

John Ford and I have worked together in the right way for a number of years. Even if we had material that said nothing, had no content, we tried to work along the right way and make good entertainment. We have just finished another picture, a Western, using all the old material of Western stories. We tried to make it in a new way and make it significant entertainment, at least.

The right way is for a producer to hire a writer and a director who know their business and tell them to go ahead and make a picture.

Mr. Ford and I, for example, had *The Informer* for five years. We wanted to make it. We went from studio to studio and the producers would not let us make it. Finally, at the RKO Studio we found a

producer who said, "Go ahead." Even when we were making it the president of the studio said we were crazy, he said the producer was crazy to make a story like that.



Dudley Nichols speaking at the National Board Conference

So, when we first sat down to the job we had had the story in our minds a long time. We had some ideas on how we wanted to make it. We did not sit down just together, but we called in the man who was going to design the sets, and we called in the man to write the musical score, we had the business manager, the producer, the associate producer. In fact, we had fifteen people in the room. We talked about the setting, the mood, the kind of lighting. We wanted to make something that had integrity as a whole, not a picture that was written in one mood, photographed in another, directed in another and would finally emerge as just a Hollywood picture.

The novel itself was a beautiful work of art. We were fortunate in that. Liam O'Flaherty had written a great drama of a man against a group of people. Unfortunately, we felt it would be difficult to show

the struggle as he had portrayed it. He had a man turning traitor to a radical communist group, or labor group, in Ireland. We wanted to give it a larger scope so we said that we would make it the Irish Revolution Easter trouble, give it a national scope. Informing and treason is the same, except that it assumes a larger significance.

Then we sought for a symbolism which would not be apparent. Symbolism is only good when the audience is not aware of it. So when we had to deal with a character like Gypo, who was a traitor out of ignorance, out of smallness of mind, we thought we would make it the state of his mind. We would photograph the whole thing in its exteriors.

Again, as the story progresses he is overtaken by conscience slowly working up out of his unconscious mind. We gave that a symbol of a blind man. So that when Gypo first gets his money, his 20 pounds, as he starts away, as he comes out he sees the blind man, seizes him by the throat and realizes he is blind. It is as if he has seen his own conscience. He passes his hand over his eyes and hurries away and always the tapping of the blind man's stick is behind him. I dare say nobody was aware that it was a symbol, but it very definitely was.

We chose symbol after symbol like that but concealed them, we thought very cunningly. Finally, the picture emerged as a simple story of an informer, but I venture to say that the emotional effect of the symbolism we used is what accounted for the success of the picture.

Now, ordinarily you cannot choose those methods. Ordinarily you have a producer who is, in many cases, a suppressed writer. That is one of the worst enemies of Hollywood, a suppressed writer.

The producer will call in a writer. The producer has a feeling about the story, and he really wants the writer to be his amanuensis, he wants the thing written as he himself feels it. It is impossible, naturally, to write the way another man feels. There may be some kinship so close that it is possible, but I have never seen it yet. Good writers will come in, very talented writers, and they will write a script and the producer will say, "No, I don't like it."

"Why?"

Because it isn't the way he would write it, if he could write.

So he calls in another writer, and then you have a long succession of writers. Finally you arrive at a machine-made sort of script which represents the run-of-the-mill picture. The director is called in and he has a different feeling, and he expresses his feeling about the script. Then the producer's feeling comes to the fore and they emerge in a third feeling which does not represent either one of them clearly, and the picture is made that way.

That is the wrong way.

The thing that most pictures lack is integrity, wholeness. They do not have the wholeness of mood and effort that a picture like *Grand Illusion* has, one that is made by one or two people. I mean their emotions control the making of it.

The Informer had it. We have tried since and have been unable to do it again because we did not have the freedom we had then. At least in the last picture again Mr. Ford and I have integrity of mood. The picture is not significant perhaps, but again, in making this last picture, *Stagecoach*, we sat down and talked with the man who was going to make the sets, and we talked with the man writing the music. We chewed the thing out.

Just to show you how new ideas develop out of these things for example, you have always seen pictures photographed on open sets, with the light pouring down from above as if no room ever had a ceiling. Rarely do you see people in pictures as you see them in real life with a light, for example, reflected from a table under the face, or as I see you from a light reflected from that corner of the room.

We said, "Let's try to get a different lighting in the picture." We put ceilings on the sets. They never had done it. They said you could not do it because you could not get the sound. The mike is above the heads of the people and if you had a ceiling you would not get a sound.

We found a way to get around that. In our interiors we lighted everything from cross lights. We would throw a light on the table and have it reflected on the faces of the people. We tried to get the mood of our story in that way.

And it is only by working in that integrated way that you can get wholeness in a story, which our Hollywood pictures lack. They have a glossy surface. They are like cars that come off a belt in a factory, they are all highly polished but they are all too much alike. They haven't individuality, they haven't the touch of integrated feeling.

Perhaps that is the reason why new developments in films must come through foreign films where they can do it. Perhaps *Grand Illusion* will shake them up in Hollywood. I am sure that it will, and it will make them realize that they have not been exploring their field. That is wrong and they must branch out and try to get in new things. Films are in their infancy as a medium of expression. There are all manner of things that are not explored as yet.

For example, we are used to certain conventions, the fadeout as a curtain in the theatre. We are used to a lap dissolve, to cut. Our mind absorbs the conventions. In the beginning they were terrific steps ahead when Griffith did them. He was a wonderfully creative man. He invented the lap, parallel lines of action, the cutting, the montage, the fadeout from the curtain to carry you over time and distance.

We accept all of those. There are other conventions that are not touched. Perhaps a picture can be made without any lapping, dissolving or fading at all. Perhaps it is possible to cut from point to point. Perhaps the public will accept it. There is no attempted experimentation. It might be able to get a tempo when you need it, by saying that you will not lap, or dissolve or show distance here.

But, there are all sorts of conventions. The thing we must realize is that this medium isn't explored and there is no attempt to explore it being made in Hollywood. The cost is too great. You cannot experiment with \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000; you cannot do it. The hugeness of the investment and the greatness of the industry tends to make it static, tends to mire it down. It was much more vigorous when it was a small industry. It had more power to experiment.

Perhaps it would be interesting to tell you how we worked on our latest picture, *Stagecoach*.

Mr. Ford and I found a story. It was a short story in *Collier's* which appeared several years ago. We bought it. It was called "Stage to Lordsburg." The author had gotten his idea from a lot of the Western material. It did not have a very original turn. The idea and the structure of it was based on a stagecoach ride. It concerned a group of people who got into the coach in an Arizona town, unnamed, and made a trip for two days to Lordsburg, New Mexico. Everything that happened to them on that trip was a story.

When I first got the story I thought it was a mixture of *Grand Hotel*, *The Covered Wagon* and *The Iron Horse*, so I called it "The Grand Covered Iron Stagecoach."

We then tried to wrest it into an interesting form for ourselves, to make it our picture.

Our first problem was to get a group of characters. The characters in the story weren't well drawn, they were just outlines. We tossed them aside and began to seek for characters that were interesting to us. They all turned out to be infamous characters. There isn't a likable character in the crowd, but they are interesting.

Then we sought for the old Western technique which they forgot when sound came in. As a matter of fact, it was the fact of Hollywood being on the West Coast that developed pictures so rapidly, I honestly believe, and so does Mr. Ford. The studios in Hollywood were near the desert. There were cowboys there. There was outdoor photography and fine hills and you could get action. Out of the action of horses and men came montage, speed, and so forth. It developed rapidly. It might have taken many, many years longer had the studios not moved from the East. They would not have had the action. You cannot have action indoors, as you had it on the plains.

We said, "Let's make a picture that recovers all of the old feeling that they had for films before sound came in." They developed it very finely through the Western pictures and brought it to other sources. When sound came in they fled to the theatre and thought that was the answer, the theatre people talked. They have forgotten a great deal of their knowledge of how to make pictures.

We tried to make a picture that would be practically a textbook on the old ways of making pictures. Then we tried to get a tempo of incident, and we tried to get a double climax, because the chase was the logical development of the old films, the westerns and so on. They would build up the case through the chase. The Keystone comedies had it. It was a perfect denouement for the picture.

We thought we would put two climaxes into it. Our first climax was an Indian fight, and our second was the end of the story in the town. There is a great danger that people will reach for their hats in the sixth reel. I do not know whether they will because that remains to be seen. We played with that a long time, trying to get all of the excitement of a final finish in the sixth reel and yet keep people in the theatre. And then we go on and give them even a greater climax.

It is really going back to first principles. That is all we tried to do in this picture. We did not try for any significance of content, no morals, nothing of any kind except good entertainment, and to go back to first principles because to discover new things you must go back to first principles, to the sound things in motion picture making.

I will never forget that in screen writing, as in the theatre, the essence of all story telling is struggle. You have one person pitted against another. A prize fight is a primitive drama. Jacob wrestling with the Angel of God is primitive drama.

First must be decided where the conflict lies, it may be between two people, or may be between two sides, or two groups of people, as in the case of the Montagues and the Capulets; or, it can be one man against God, or man against the universe; all kinds of problems. You must know where your conflict lies. As a writer, although you do not write directly to that, unless you feel that and know where it is, you are going to get lost.

Then you try to develop it. This is the kind of pattern back of the writing of the play itself. I try to develop that in a series of surges.

As a rule there are no invariable rules. Here's one way to start. Let us open very casually and see our people and get to know

them and to know their problems. They are problems. After you know your people you discover them in some conflict, and that is one surge. Let that die down. Then you take it up again and you bring it up to a crisis. So nobody knows what is going to happen out of it. You pick it up again and resolve honestly or happily, if you can, to conclude it. Back of all good screen playwriting is a feeling and an awareness of this struggle that goes on to make your story interesting. Without struggle it is not interesting.

I am afraid these are sketchy remarks about screen writing.

There are a few criticisms I want to make, and in order to get them correct, I have written them down.

The sins of Hollywood are not the sins you read about in the papers. Actually, the private lives of the people who make films are exemplary, I think as good as the lives of any group of people anywhere. But the real sins of Hollywood concern the public lives of the makers of films.

The first sin is in the fact that they control the most exciting medium of dramatic expression the world has ever seen, and they do not back up this medium with sufficient encouragement, courage, knowledge and imagination. They are timid beyond belief in breaking new ground. No new story material will be touched until it has already appeared in the old proving ground; that is, in fiction magazines, novels and the stage. Producers wait for writers in other fields of expression to come forward with the products of their imaginations before they will dare to venture into the new field. They rake over the fields of the past endlessly. They look through their account books for the successes of the past and wherever there was a good harvest they sow again. Revival after revival appears, and then they begin to have revivals of revivals of revivals and finally revivals of revivals of revivals of revivals, until Hollywood becomes a mammoth revival meeting.

I looked in the papers the other day at some of the other productions, and I saw *Beau Geste*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Three Musketeers*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*. They are endless, all the old pictures, because they were successful in

their time and almost every Western picture is a rehash of old ideas.

They have to find new material, they have to stop relying on outside writers writing in ideas. They have to develop material themselves and invade the field of life. It is all around them. There are stories everywhere. There are 100 stories right in this room.

The next sin is the practice of putting the star above the story. The sad truth is that ultimately this is bad even for the star. The producers find it much easier, that is, it requires less energy and imagination to create a stock in trade for stars than to create a trade mark that will make a good and exciting picture wherever you see it.

It is very hard to keep up that trade mark, but it is easy to create a flock of stars so you can put their names up. The producer remembers the good old days of the silent pictures when anything would sell that carried the names of certain stars. The energy of both producers and writers goes to building up the capital stock of stars. Once a studio has a great array of star names it feels it can lie back on its oars and sell any kind of story as long as two or three of these names can appear on the fronts of the theatres. At this point they are no longer selling motion pictures, that is, entertainment of illusion, but they are selling individuals. They are not selling actors but the supposed glamor of human beings. The more important the star becomes the less he must be an actor. The very essence of great acting is to submerge your own personality in the character you are creating. But when a promising young actor is a leading man this illusion must be destroyed. The audience must not be allowed to forget for a moment that they are seeing Clark Gable, Robert Taylor or Tyrone Power.

As a matter of fact, I saw a telegram the other day from a prominent Hollywood producer, the head of a great studio, to a director. This producer wanted to make a picture of a historical character. The director had rejected the assignment because he wanted to cast a young leading man in his 20s for a noble, historical personality. I won't name it because I would reveal something. This director telephoned back and said, "You cannot use that actor; you must

use a man like Walter Huston, or Raymond Massey, a great actor."

The producer wired back, "Unless the public sees a young leading man under the character we won't go big at the box office."

That, to me, is a flagrant violation of the whole idea of picture making. It is putting the star above the story.

The third sin is a censorship that Hollywood has fashioned for itself. This censorship is largely the result of timidity and bad taste, in my opinion again. They have allowed it to grow until it stifles every effort at honest story telling. It is no longer possible to deal with the every-day scenes of life around us. This censorship is largely a moral censorship, yet it seems to me the very essence of morality is to tell the truth. If there is a phase of life which becomes objectionable if you tell the truth about it, then do not touch it. Let the movies stay away from it, but either tell the truth about it or deal with it honestly as you can, or do not mess up with it.

There are thousands of phases of life that can be dealt with dramatically in the strictest truth without offense. It requires courage and imagination to make pictures of these phases.

I think you people of the National Board of Review are helping strongly to point the way when you choose as the best picture *Grand Illusion*. It is a picture about something, it is about the love of man for man. It moves you. It uncovers new things, yet things that we all know. But the old things have to be uncovered and revealed to us and we have to feel them. I venture to say that had the script of *Grand Illusion* been hawked around Hollywood no such picture would have emerged.

The fourth sin is the failure of Hollywood to make what I call class pictures. I mean for class audiences. Your organization has been classifying pictures for years, but always every picture is made for a general audience. The result is that a story aimed at the adult mind has to be weakened to make it palatable for a six-year-old child. A story that should have a direct appeal to children must have something injected to attract the adult mind as well. The result is confusion.

It is plain to see the reason for this gener-

alizing for all the pictures, it is the high cost of picture making. Some way should be found to reduce the cost of pictures which are aimed at a smaller audience. Producers must cease thinking purely in terms of the greatest profit because that is not really the most profitable thing to do. So great an industry must think in terms of the future.

I have heard it said that book publishers are ambassadors to posterity. They accept that obligation, the best ones always have. I think in the same sense motion picture producers are ambassadors to the world. That is an obligation and they must accept it.

Unless they make pictures that appeal to mature intelligences they will not only cease to draw into their theatres new audiences but they will lose their old audiences as well in time.

The stock in trade of the motion picture industry is not only studios, its stars, producers, directors and writers, it is also its audiences.

And it is to you people here as the representatives of all the audiences that I give these four of the public sins of Hollywood. They cannot be corrected in a day, but the time must come when they are corrected if

for no other reason than for profit, which is the God of Hollywood.

Profit is not a bad motive, but it must be far-sighted and intelligently guided or else it will destroy the whole industry. They must have a future. Every other industry has a research department. You go up to General Electric Company, in Schenectady, and you will find people working in the laboratory doing research, finding new ways of doing things. You go to Hollywood and there is no research, except perhaps in the technical side. You will find no forum where directors can get together and discuss their problems. You find no forum for writers to discuss problems of screen writing. You have never heard it being discussed.

There should be research there all the time. There is no way to train a screen writer in Hollywood except to put him on the payroll and perhaps have him make a bad picture, or discover that he is good, and so he gets a foothold.

There should be a proving ground, a training school and a research department. They should experiment, look to the future, try to get new audiences and hold their own in that way.

An Ace Publicity Man's Angle on Pictures

By HOWARD DIETZ

Director of Advertising and Publicity, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

A press agent enters timidly into discussions at a National Board of Review meeting. In fact a press agent enters timidly into any discussions anywhere, since there has grown up the general idea that he is trying to sell a gilded brick for pure gold. But the press agent has come to know that the gold brick business based as it is on a lie could not survive beyond the hit-and-run stage. Now the movies, themselves, have gone beyond the hit and run stage and their survival rests entirely on their essential position in society. The growth and popularity of the movies in the last ten years furthers the belief that the movies have fulfilled a desired function. This function, the role of the film in society, has been subject to

most severe and interesting criticism, its severity and interest having multiplied as the movies have improved. I am confident that when the movies arrive at that golden age of merit, which producers dream of, there will then be an avalanche of disapproval. This is not said scornfully for this is as it should be.

For, the critic and the artist are not comfortably at one with the popular taste. The critic and the artist runs against the stream thus forcing the public to question its own taste and ultimately improve it as the critic and artist go on to the next best thing. But certain of the implications of the artist find a paradoxical position when dealing with the popular movie. Consider, for example, the

medium of satire. Satire is only effective when it is criticizing something that is popular. Satire is not a successful method for making a movie because the author of necessity must take to task that which the public passionately likes. If I cannot make my point of view crystal clear, let me at the outset make it at least visible through isinglass. Having been engaged in the business of films for over twenty years, my approach may be regarded as the organic approach, observations made through long association with an industry from its architectural through its structural stages. Certain things have happened which preclude doing certain things suggested. Certain phobias have developed at the same time, which are in reality a myth. This must not be construed as an apologetic role for Hollywood. It is rather a realistic attempt to apply the advice of criticism, to explain the rejection of what often seems like very good advice. Every generalization about films includes a parallel generalization about audiences. When Mr. Archibald McLeish, or Mr. John Howard Lawson, or Mr. Howard Barnes, or Mr. Frank Nugent, or the late Harry Alan Potamkin or the Bureau of Propaganda Analysis demand a certain type of picture, they are presupposing a certain type of audience for it. Most of their demands have been exciting, properly idealistic but they often ignore the role of the film in contemporary society. Indeed it is difficult for any individual to be reconciled to the point of view that the box-office while not exactly final in its valuations, must nevertheless play its democratic role somewhat in the manner of the ballot box. Starting from scratch, an essential error is made in the very use of the phrase, "the movies." The movies like a prism contain every color of the rainbow. One cannot readily generalize about the movies without running into many exceptions. One might just as well generalize about "printed matter." Each year the critic in these generalizations is confronted with so many of these exceptions that it would be better for the critic of films to adopt the position of the critic of other arts and only discuss the exceptions if he has to round out a theory. Aside from various attitudes toward taste and the cliché (bad taste and the cliché prevailing in the majority of all pop-

ular amusements, literary or otherwise) there are a few specific kernels of criticism which come through. They may be listed as follows:



Howard Dietz addresses the luncheon of the National Board

(1) The movie producers underate the audience; (2) All social problems involved in a film are brought to a solution when the boy meets the girl; (3) That the crime problem is treated in the films as if it is solved when the criminal is caught; (4) That films glorify war.

There are several other considerations we will touch on when we have briefly made comment about these four points.

(1) There is no evidence to show that the movies underate its mass audience. In fact it can be well demonstrated that the growth of the film in the last ten years, during which time it has doubled its audience, would rather suggest that the public is not only getting what it wants but more of the public are getting to want it. Each member of the public is also a critic even if he does not appear in print. The biggest force for the acceptance or rejection of a film or of any idea is propaganda by word of mouth. Not only in the United States but in foreign countries, where 73% of the audiences at-

tend Hollywood films, we find a growing public acceptance of the film as the movie makers make it. Had the movies underrated the intelligence of its audiences, these audiences would have rejected them long ago. This does not mean that the movie should not improve, for the essential discussion in every story conference in Hollywood revolves around this point. Can Hollywood keep the vast audience that it has gotten by continuing to give it the same thing that it got it with. In other words, is a mere switch of background enough? Must the same story be told again or must it be told differently or is there a new one? That Hollywood is attuned to this problem and has made its own gradual improvement in its work must come under the head of the progressive attitude rather than a static one. Indeed they find that when those who revolt against the conventional film attempt to lift it from its moorings and to make a work aspiring to be a unique result of a unique temperament, Hollywood finds that these careful students completely overlook the speed of grasp of the average audience. Plot points are developed too slowly. This too is a part of the intelligence aside from themes.

(2) As for the Boy-Meets-Girl film. Perhaps the difference between an exclusive and a popular work may be expressed with this question. Is the problem of the artist like that of the mathematician; is he supposed to merely state a problem or also to solve it? While I like it best when he merely states it, the strange fact persists that most popular authors in fiction or in film seem to attempt a solution. The boy does get the girl. Now there must be more to the coincidence of the amazing persistence of love, in most narrative. Does love conquer all? Perhaps it does. Perhaps underlying the problems of life and work that are brought to bear in the film is the love motif. Perhaps all acquisitiveness, social upheavals are incidents to the demand of a better sentimental life. Yet it is not necessarily conclusive that the bringing of the boy and girl together demands that the audience consider the problem as solved. In the theatre there is on Broadway an exceptional play called, "The White Steed," by Paul Vincent Carroll. This play poses the problem of "spiritual

book-keeping" as an impossible estimate of the true human position in the church. Mr. Carroll's problem is not solved except for the comfort of the conclusion wherein the boy does seemingly get the girl. I know that the argument that Mr. Carroll has presented goes on and on. While it has come into the open more clearly in the last few years, it has always been there. Actually reverting to the film, one must bear in mind that if the audience knows beforehand that the boy is going to get the girl, the problem of the film dramatist is made much greater. He has lost this one essential element of suspense and the technique of working within this prescribed limitation cannot be ignored as a part of the art of the film. And if the audience is bored with the method used for the boy to get the girl then the film will be rejected as an undesirable work.

(3) With regard to the crime problem. The movies do not deal with the crime problem, they deal with crime, itself. A boy robs a bank, the shadow of darkness falls upon other virtuous characters, the criminal is ultimately caught; he pays his penance and we are ready for the fade-out. Now in actual life, the judge on the bench does not find out about slum conditions that give rise to the boy's robbery. He must ascertain whether he did or did not rob the bank. If he robbed the bank, he gets a punishment under the law. If he did not rob the bank, he goes free. Now a responsible school of thought contends that this is a fallacy of the law. But if it is, I think we should first correct the fictions in the law before we fight the fictions in the film. Indeed most of the social criticisms against the movie run onto rocks because of this fact. The critic, having been used to the play and the book, the concert and art exhibit, regards the film similarly as a critic of social habits. He looks at the film as if it is apart from society when he should look at it as if it is a part of society. The film indeed represents a sort of shadow world and it has built up its own equities, almost its own social system which must not be confused too often with other domains. This platonic world of the public has almost succeeded in making the author little more than a ghost writer for the public, itself. Thus we find on the part of many a demand for a social revolution in

the shadow world even before they ask for one in the real world.

(4) As to the charge that films glorify war. I do not think it is the intention of the producers to glorify war, in fact quite the opposite. A strange psychological result comes from watching the film that is even most anti-war. If the hero goes through the ordeal of war, we say what a marvelous hero he is to survive all this ordeal. If the villain gets injured or perhaps killed by the war, we say what a wonderful thing has happened. Having watched numberless films dealing with war that were not documentary, but were works of suspense, I find this curious phenomenon to prevail. So naturally the producer is on the horns of a dilemma. If this can be true about *The Big Parade* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*, perhaps the only anti-war film must be written without showing soldiers in battle or on parade. Perhaps the intrigues behind the line or before the war would make the real true anti-war film.

With regard to other charges. The movies have been accused of boycotting thought of contemporary events. Critics have pointed to the difficulties encountered by the film *Blockade*. Regardless of the issues, the facts remain that a movie producer did make *Blockade* and it was not the film producers who interfered with it. Criticism of this kind should be directed solely against those who are responsible, not against Hollywood. Yet the position of the film with regard to broad topical questions must be examined carefully. First, the industry is an international one. But more important than that is the fact that the lack of opportunity for selecting its audience makes the theatre a transient forum where trouble often follows with controversy on the screen. I, myself, like topicality. The serial story that I most enjoy means waiting for tomorrow's newspaper. It is the news, itself. Yet the film cannot quite cope with this. To make an analogy, let us suppose that the newspaper were like the theatre. Let us assume that the New York Times instead of being delivered individually to each of its readers, instead were read from a platform each day. 750,000 readers of the Times are asked to gather in Central Park to hear someone with a good micro-

phone voice read the paper to them. Now no one would call the Times a highly controversial paper. Yet when the speaker read the dispatches from Spain by Mr. Carney, a mild disturbance might be created on the part of those who were pro-Loyalist and similarly when the speaker read the opinion of the news from Spain by Mr. Mathews, it is possible the pro-Francoites would have something to say. It is possible also that the speaker would have something thrown at him. Each of you has the right to select his dream speaker to play this part.

We know that in the films we have had most bitter experiences. A film, *The Calahans and the Murphys* was stopped from exhibition because it created disturbances and yet the message of this film was little more than the contention that sometimes some Irishmen might like to drink and occasionally an Irishman might like to fight. However, as events get into perspective, the film makes use of them on the screen. The best war film was not *The Kaiser and the Beast of Berlin*, released during the heat of the struggle but was either *All Quiet on the Western Front* or *The Big Parade*, both made almost ten years after the war.

The improvement of the foreign films has inspired statements that foreign films are better than Hollywood's films. Some time ago I had this controversy in print with Frank Nugent and I have never been satisfactorily answered in my contention that the comparison was made with a few very best foreign films and merely the average Hollywood product. The best of the foreign films are exceptionally good but when one considers that the United States makes 400 films and the rest of the world almost 2000, the number of good foreign films that we get is ridiculously small. We are also captivated by the charm of different atmosphere, different approach which is most observed by those who have been surfeited with our own domestic brand. Yet again Hollywood films entertained 73% of the audiences abroad and many of our films are regarded with this attitude of seeing something different in those countries where there is a prevalence of domestic manufacture enforced by government edict. In Italy, for example, where films of all other nations have been banned, there is a whistling and

hissing even at the Italian trailers announcing the next Italian film. This may be construed as the first opportunity the public of Italy has had to demonstrate a criticism of a government policy.

A concluding note on censorship. Hollywood has self-imposed restrictions, they are not censor rules. It does not operate in the same way, for instance, as the British Censorship where even a play like "Green Pastures" cannot be shown. If the author finds it difficult to create a story under these rules, it is most important that he speak against them. At the same time he must guard against rejecting these voluntary rules only to get something more statutory and worse. Yet I do not find that the author who complains about Hollywood is always right. It seems to me that the author who feels passionately about the film makes very little effort to contribute creative work on his own time. He takes no risk. In the theatre he writes a finished play and submits it to the producer. Very few finished scripts are written by the author on his farm in

Connecticut when he is not on salary. Perhaps a finished work is something that he could more reasonably fight for. Discussing his work with the producer in the process of creation, it is only natural that there should be changes. He often submits to changes which he does not like because he is on salary. I have no objection to any one being on salary, I think it is an awfully good place to be. But if deep down in his heart, the author wants to make a movie and is willing to take a chance just as the early picture producers did with their investments, then let him too make the investment of his time and his thought. So that when the producer rejects his work or suggests changing it, he has a position in black and white on which he can stand. I do not believe six motion picture scripts written in this fashion by experienced authors could be trotted out. Leading one to the suspicion, to distort a phrase from Deems Taylor, that an attempt is being made to go on the streets in order to get money for the trousseau.

Research in the Motion Pictures

By HAROLD HENDEE

Director of Research for RKO Radio Pictures

MANY of you have doubtless often wondered just how a motion picture company begins one of its productions and where all the settings, costumes, furniture and so forth originate. The answer is very simple—all the larger studios now maintain extensive research departments, and it is in these departments that the first steps toward actual production have their genesis.

Let me tell you briefly how such a department functions at RKO Radio Pictures. We begin our work the moment a story is purchased for a picture. On all of our major productions we start weeks or oftentimes months before actual production begins. It is our duty to furnish the Studio with authentic photographs, illustrations and data from which all the sets, costumes, furniture and props that you see in the picture are made.

Naturally, we encounter many difficulties. Sometimes these are caused because the author of the story has not been overcareful in authenticating his material. An author writes his story primarily for story value, and his audience, as they read, often do not visualize his characters and his scenes to any great extent. But as soon as that story is made into a picture and is shown on the screen, every scene, character and object is visualized down to the smallest detail—and each detail must be correct. Where the author can slip in a few vague phrases regarding locations, costumes, etc., and get away with it, we have to show them to you and be absolutely accurate about it. It is very interesting to me to note that all the major companies in the picture business have research departments. Yet I do not know of a single book or magazine publisher who maintains one. However, I think it is only

fair to add that a great many of our best authors do do extensive research before they write their stories, and inevitably this is reflected in their work. They are the people who write the stories that will last.

The general public today, I am sure, realizes that so-called "costume pictures" require a great deal of authentication, but it may interest you to know that my department at RKO Radio Pictures does almost as much work on films with modern backgrounds. For instance, a picture with such a prosaic locale as a small town in the middle west requires a great deal of work. It is obvious that life in a Kansas town is very different in many respects from life in New York or Hollywood.

So my staff gets to work, and we check on the houses, stores, banks, hotels, streets and what not, so that when the picture is made out in California the sets will be accurate. The stories for our pictures may take place anywhere in the known world. One day we'll be looking into the matter of telephone calls in Roumania, checking the exchange names and numbers that a Roumanian would call, and the type of telephone he would use. The next day we will be collecting data on life in Nome, Alaska. And when we are through with that our next assignment may be Sydney, Paris or Calcutta.

There are a million and one things that have to be checked both in the modern picture and in the costume picture. The interesting thing about it is that modern pictures are sometimes very much more difficult when it comes to finding the specific matter that you are interested in than are the costume pictures. You see costume pictures are very readily checked in libraries and in museums.

Whatever the location or period, the method of authenticating a picture is always the same. We read the original story and make copious notes of everything in the story that may be necessary when the film goes into production: costumes, props and settings, both exterior and interior. Then we get photographs of the exact thing called for. We even check on the dialogue. This sometimes presents some very interesting problems in the way of slang, dialects or provincialisms. You will find slang appearing in stories of all periods, and checking on its authenticity reveals the most amazing

facts. Some slang, popular say twenty years ago, is obsolete and meaningless today; other slang in use two decades ago is still so fresh that you can hardly believe that it was in use so long ago. Provincialisms also offer quite a problem: we must always be on our guard to make sure that an expression of speech, current only in the South, does not creep into a picture where the characters are all Maine Yankees, or that expressions peculiar to the doughboy are not used in a picture of 1910.

The notes made on the stories often run into hundreds upon hundreds of items, and each item must be carefully checked. Photographs of everything necessary must be found, as well as written material to augment and explain these photographs. Naturally, this search for pictures and other material is often extremely involved. Research in the movies, in fact, is often akin to detective work.

Manners and customs have to be checked. Of course, any legal procedure, or any medical procedure in a doctor or hospital picture, has to be checked very carefully. Every telephone number and every street address is checked, the name of every character, the name of every firm, the name of every manufacturer, of every product. We check the time for journeys to and from a place, because a writer may say that one leaves New York at nine o'clock and the next scene is in Chicago at half past two. Every newspaper and every magazine is checked and permission gotten to use them. We have to be sure that the text is acceptable to the newspaper and to the magazine.

Not only when the story is supplied to us do we check but very often we check in advance and supply the story material. RKO has a new picture called *Boy Slaves* that was supplied entirely through the research department from actual data that we obtained about the situation in the story.

In matters of authentication, we never take the statement of one person about a matter in question. We always try to have at least six opinions on a subject. One of the most confusing things to a beginner in the research field is to discover that the opinions of several experts are quite often widely at variance. But if four opinions out of six manage to agree we feel that the

majority opinion is fairly safe to follow.

Among the many pictures that I have authenticated, naturally, certain ones have met with a more hearty response on the part of the public than others. It is gratifying to me to have been responsible for the authentication of such outstanding successes as *Beau Geste*, *Cimarron*, *Little Women* and *The Informer*, all of which won Gold Medals. You might be interested to know that we worked for seven months on *Cimarron* before a single scene was shot. Mr. Howard Estabrook, who wrote the scenario, was supplied with 100 books and hundreds and hundreds of photographs which he had to look at while he was writing his scenario. He absorbed so much of the locale and the period that I believe that is one reason why the picture was so excellent an example of what can be done. We worked five months on *Little Women*. *The Informer* also demanded a great deal of labor because so little authentic material was available. That, of course, was because it was a modern picture and of such relatively recent date that very little was to be found in the usual sources of supply. As a matter of fact, most of our material on *The Informer* came directly from Ireland.

To give you an idea of the type of questions that we have to cover, I will tell you what we happened to come across as we checked the scenario on *The Age of Innocence*, which was laid in 1870. To begin with the author had his street cleaners pushing snow down manholes on lower Fifth Avenue. I told him he would have to start his picture differently because they did not push snow down manholes in 1870. They wanted to know if they could have rented chairs for a funeral in that day, and that was true, they could. And could they play the "Blue Danube Waltz"? You see the music in our pictures is all checked very carefully too before it is used. This was written in 1867 so they could play it. They referred to the Brooklyn Bridge. The cornerstone was laid in 1870, and it was opened in 1883 so you see it was being started at that time and could be used. They wanted to have the people at a smart dance place applaud after a dance. I told them they could not do that. Anything emotional, you know, was considered rather bad form at that time so

you did not clap your hands, you stood there and politely hoped they would play again.

They wanted to know the kind of sugar that was used. Could they say, "One lump, or two" in passing a cup of tea. Well, you could say, "Will you have a lump of sugar?" It was not the square lump of today; it was loaf sugar, in a large piece and you cut pieces, so it did come off in lumps. Could one of the characters take pills out of a bottle? I said, no it would be better to have them in little round boxes. They wanted to know if they could use a blotting paper instead of a sand shaker. They could because blotting paper had come in by that time. They wanted to know if they could have caviar sandwiches served. Yes, they had caviar in those days. Also, they wanted to know if they could have hot water bottles, and this they could because they were in use. I am just telling you these instances in that picture to show you how carefully we check and how much attention is paid to petty details.

Thus you see that each picture has its own particular problem to be solved by the research department before actual production starts.

Personally, I feel that the research department is one of the most valuable units in the giant organization of a motion picture company. Where the research department is allowed to function at its maximum efficiency a better grade of picture is the inevitable result, and a company that follows this method deserves your support.

As you know, there has been a great deal of discussion of late on the part of the press and by individuals regarding the need of more so-called "better pictures." May I say on behalf of the producers that we are quite as much interested in the higher grade pictures as some of you are. Unfortunately, in the past in many instances producing this type of picture has resulted in heavy losses for us simply because of lack of patronage on your part. You as a group can wield a great influence, if you will, in your various communities by getting back of good pictures. The public does have it in its power to control, to a considerable extent, the output of the studios. Therefore, the way to assure yourselves of high grade pictures is to support the good ones.

The Problem of Casting a Motion Picture

By MARIAN ROBERTSON

Talent Scout for R.K.O. Radio Pictures

BEFORE I begin with details on the mechanics of casting, I want to tell you about a friend of mine. She is with another film company, and our problems are much alike. Last month she went abroad for a vacation. London was her first stop, and being a well-informed person, she was looking forward to getting an inside picture of international affairs. At her first dinner party she was the guest of a cabinet minister's wife, and celebrities were all around her. As they sat down at table, my friend started to ask about British armaments. But the hostess was ahead of her, with an even more urgent inquiry. "We're so glad to have you here," she beamed. "You're just the person to settle a controversy which has been raging for months. Tell us, who is going to play Scarlett O'Hara?"

My reason for adding this bit to the legend is that the Scarlett O'Hara fever has certainly made the world conscious for the first time how large the casting process looms as a factor in film production. There are problems of casting to be met daily. As many problems as there are different types of characters, and actors to play them.

In Hollywood, the process operates on a huge scale. It may involve anywhere from several dozen roles to be filled for an intimate type of drama like *Man to Remember*, up to several thousand in a spectacle like *Gunga Din*. Each part has been analyzed as to its importance and length of time it will occupy in the total number of shooting days. The casting director goes into a huddle with the producer in charge, the director, and the author. The casting director provides lists of available players whose work is known. Their qualifications are discussed by the group, and the ones agreed on are forthwith signed for the parts. The leads are chosen first, from contract and free lance actors, then the bit parts are assigned, and finally the extras for group scenes are summoned through Central Casting. This vast bureau functions solely for the benefit of

the extra player, who rarely escapes from silent roles to speak lines. But from stars down to extras, ninety percent of the individuals handled in Hollywood casting are already known by previous film performances.

In the East, the talent department functions with a difference. We are dealing chiefly with newcomers who have never faced a camera. They have to be discovered, groomed, and presented to the producers in the best possible light. The screen test is the trick which enables us to show samples of new talent to our studio 3,000 miles away.

More than half the newcomers we see in the East are not actors, but they belong to closely allied fields of entertainment. We maintain regular coverage on seven definite sources in New York and eastern key cities: Broadway plays and tryouts in nearby cities; Touring companies and summer stock theatres; Radio programs, dramatic and musical; Night clubs; Community and Little theatres; College and drama school groups and Commercial models.

You will notice at once that these different sources have one element in common. Every person concerned in them has become accustomed to facing the public; has acquired showmanship and a knack of projecting a definite personality.

Broadway plays rate first as a source of possible film talent. And what a lot of plays there are! People say, "I do envy you, seeing all those interesting plays!" And it is interesting; there's always that one moment before the curtain rises, when we anticipate something new and exciting. But before you turn an envious green, bear this in mind that out of 110 plays produced last season, employing a total of 2,196 actors and actresses, 74% were rank failures. You can exercise your choice in patronizing hit shows; but the talent scouts see every single play, good, bad, and indifferent.

In addition to the Broadway productions there are an equal number of amateur and dramatic school plays to cover and pre-

Broadway try-outs must be seen in advance. Out of town try-outs are rich in unexpected surprises. There are so many things to go wrong while a show is being whipped into shape, it's a wonder a play ever opens on schedule. In my time I've seen so many plays close during try-outs that I often wonder if I'm a Jonah. But I still enjoy them. I suspect I'm stage-struck, or rather theatre-struck.

Regardless of dramatic merit, every new play serves as a showcase for acting ability. We can't afford to miss anything. Not all the actors we see can be fitted into picture jobs immediately, but a full record is kept of all plays, with comments on each actor's performance and possible usefulness in future parts. The requirements of the studio change with every script which is put in work. The talent departments get these scripts before they are completed so that suggestions for casting can be made in advance.

Out of the 275 actors in the worst plays of last season, there were 29 that ran a week or less, only one girl was given a screen test. That's close to a 300 to 1 shot. Her play, incidentally, enjoyed the solitary distinction of closing after a single performance. But her unhappy experience had not been wasted, for she made an impression in that one performance which we remembered months later when the right picture part came along to be filled.

It is not unusual for an actor to be signed for pictures on the strength of outstanding stage work as far back as a year previous. Certain types not only cannot be fitted into current films; they also frequently need to grow and mature. I should say that fully two thirds of the promising youngsters we see in current plays have to be filed away for future reference.

In addition to watching the actors on Broadway, and in less professional groups, we spend a vast amount of time with aspirants who have had no stage experience whatever. Several thousand such tyros are seen in the New York office every year. They write or come in from towns all over the Eastern seaboard. Their unsolicited letters are always answered; but in the main they are far from ready for a screen test. Most of them, I suspect, ask for an interview out

of curiosity, or because the boy friend has loudly insisted they ought to be in pictures.

I am referring deliberately now to ambitious girls. They outnumber the boys four to one, for the same reasons which produce many more actresses than actors. First, girls are more likely to escape the economic pressure which forces boys into jobs in their teens; second, the female of the species is more disposed to exhibitionism. There is entirely too much wishful thinking directed towards Hollywood, without the least preparation to back it up. This is partly the result of the flood of Cinderella stories which the cheaper columnists hand out. I blame these syrupy success stories for a lot of heart-aches. Once the impressionable youngsters are bitten by the movie bug, each fresh yarn of a stenog whisked to fame overnight sends the fever higher. Their youthful egos readily convince them that Hollywood is panting for their particular charms.

I grant you, Hollywood is eager for new faces. They are always needed, and that's why the film companies maintain talent scouts. But the new faces must have something behind those strong brown foreheads and lovely eyes. They must have brains, vitality, that indefinable something we call personality . . . and if possible, a vestige of dramatic experience. More and more, as producers budget their production time as well as their costs, they are demanding newcomers with a stage background. Let me change that to dramatic background, for radio has also been a grand training ground for the screen.

Just before Christmas we sent out to Hollywood two newcomers from the radio field. John Laing and Dorothy Lovett. John had been heard over the Columbia Broadcasting system; Dorothy had done several years of dramatic work with small stations in New England. Being an unusually pretty girl, she turned to modeling in New York. It was when we interviewed models for supporting parts in *The Mad Miss Manton* that she came into my office. She didn't think her radio work mattered, but it certainly helped give her confidence when she made her screen test. Presently you'll see them both with Lee Tracy in *What's a Fixer For*. Along with them will be Ethyl Haworth, whom we also signed recently. Ethyl is the

most beautiful fashion model from Hattie Carnegie's; she has style and poise and ambition, to compensate for her very slight dramatic background.

Most of the casts, as I said before, are made up of seasoned film players. A newcomer with a Hollywood contract is bound to find himself in discouragingly fast company, if he has had no acting experience to give him confidence.

Working on a movie set can be pretty hectic at first, unless your nerves are good. The lights dazzle you; the makeup begins to run; the prop man shoves a piano against you; the camera man bellows if you move one inch from the spot he is trying to light; and his assistant rushes out as you begin to mumble your lines, and puts a tapemeasure to the tip of your nose. There are hoarse cries of "Gimme a Mickey in that corner!" "Take a rifle outside and kill that baby." Which has to do, innocently enough, with replacing a baby spotlight with a higher powered light which can be concentrated in focus, rather like aiming a rifle. A Mickey, naturally, is a baby spot with side flaps, like the ears of Disney's little mouse. All this seeming confusion, however, is necessary to get the lights set right. Then there is a final rehearsal, before the camera and microphone start recording lines and action. If the actors are letter perfect in the scene they'll survive the bad half hour, but woe if they wander from the script.

In addition to making general coverage tests to show new faces, we often get a hurry call from the coast to test definite types. When *Gunga Din* was getting under way, we made several tests for the officers' parts among the English actors then on Broadway. We also rounded up an assortment of young Hindus for the title role. You'd be surprised how many American-born Hindu lads live in and around New York. The first day the call went out, we fine-combed the East Indian shops and boards of trade. There was a Hindu colony over in Jersey, but the boys were not pure Oriental types. The second day, word had spread that we needed Orientals, and the waiting room was jammed with them. Most of them were obviously too young for the part. Meanwhile a controversy had been raging as to the exact age of *Gunga Din*.

Kipling hadn't been very definite in his poem, but we concluded that the regimental bhisti was well over boyhood years. So the lads were sent home, after a good bit of work for the interpreter; and the part went to Sam Jaffee. After his performance as the Grand Llama in *Lost Horizon*, he is certainly ageless.

We also make so-called production tests in New York. That entails using scenes from a script which they haven't been able to cast completely in Hollywood. It has to be done on very short notice. When we were making *Quality Street*, we hung up a new speed record. Fay Bainter was rehearsed, made up and tested as the elder sister; the negative was flown to the coast and developed; Pandro Berman wired approval; Miss Bainter took a plane, and was working in Hollywood—all within a week's time.

In the routine tests, however, there is more time for preparation, and the process is much more fair to the people involved. The public has recently added "screen test" to its vocabulary without knowing what a test entails. You'd be surprised how few people realize the complexity of a test. It's nothing for some gay young visitor to New York to bounce into the office and demand a test, literally between trains. She assumes that it can be done that very minute, just like snapping a photograph. This, mind you, before she has even had an audition!

A good test should be like a section from a feature picture. It must have long shots, medium, and close-ups, cutting back and forth to sustain interest and show the performers from every possible angle. Plenty of time must be spent at the outset to select the material. We can use a short scene from a play, or from a new picture script. Often material has to be especially written. This is particularly necessary in testing singers and dancers. We want to show them in a simple acting scene, as well as doing their accustomed routine. So we run up a sketch, introducing their specialty in a logical way, instead of saying, "Go ahead and sing!"

Once the material is chosen, a partner has to be provided. Actors are realizing that a supporting part in a test is to their advantage. They have less responsibility, and are less likely to become nervous and overplay.

If a test is any good (and it's a matter of pride with us to make it good) the scene is bound to be divided almost fifty-fifty. And it's very interesting to see the romances which sometimes blossom during rehearsals; as well as to watch the progress the secondary player makes later on.

While rehearsals are in progress for a scene, we like to make a preliminary test; just photographing the people to see if there are any defects to be guarded against. A still photograph is no help, it can be retouched, and usually is. The little flaws in posture and facial tricks, if any, show up only on the moving film. It is generally accepted that the camera adds about ten pounds to one's weight. This is not a hard and fast rule, but the camera does emphasize broad faces, close set eyes, lumpy figures. The last handicap is the easiest to remedy, thanks to exercise and massage. The main thing is to be forewarned. Small eyes can be apparently enlarged by raising the line of the brows and extending the outer corners of the eyes with a dark V filled in with white greasepaint. Broad faces are the worst danger spots. You can't alter the bony structure. But you can shadow the wide jawbone with dark makeup, and pile up the hair to lengthen the shape of the skull. I know one excellent young actress who was tested and rejected by three picture companies. They all said her face was too square, her head too flat to be photographed. So she shaved her hairline to raise her forehead nearly an inch, and invested in a very expensive transformation which built up the crown of her head to better proportions. You wouldn't have recognized her. She took another test, and was signed for a lead in her first picture.

The day for the test arrives. The first test is satisfactory, we've remedied whatever defects it showed; now everything depends on acting ability. The actors report at a New York studio, where we have already lined up an expert camera man and a crew of technicians; for lights, properties, and sound. It's very early in the morning, and nobody is at his best. This is a foretaste of Hollywood production work and makeup calls at seven a.m. While the set is being dressed and the camera made ready, an hour is allotted for applying the makeup which

previous experiments have shown will be the best.

This is the zero hour when temperament, if any, begins to rear its lovely head. Actors are accustomed to ungodly hours, but some of the most experienced can develop a beautiful case of sunrise jitters. It is not uncommon for the individual being tested to suggest postponing the whole business. That unfortunately is not feasible, for once a studio is reserved and crew assembled, their time has to be paid for. And at no bargain rates. The average day's test, including studio rental, camera man and crew, raw film stock, and laboratory charges, totals close to \$1,000.

Very few film aspirants are nerveless. By the time they have been made up (and they do look beautiful when the expert finishes them) they feel a little better. And actually getting on the set puts them on their mettle; they become accustomed to the confusion after the first half hour. If they have worked hard during the weeks of rehearsal and have ordinary common sense, they end by giving a very good performance.

If youngsters are too ambitious to be easily discouraged, and are not afraid of hard work let them go in for a picture career. But they must want to act more than anything else in the world. They must be willing to take the long route to Hollywood. I mean first laying a foundation in stage work, be it a dramatic school or a college drama society or a little theatre company. They can find very satisfying contacts in their local little theatres, as well as learn the rudiments of stagecraft, before storming Broadway. Promising youngsters are often spotted by a talent scout long before they leave the home town. Frances Mercer and Lucille Ball, soon to be seen in *Beauty for the Asking*, are products of community theatres.

Since the big stock companies died out, the little theatre has become an invaluable proving ground for Hollywood. And don't let anyone bring up that ancient fallacy that acting isn't important in a film career. Look at the established screen actors who have flocked back to the theatre this year, to keep a happy balance between stage and picture technique; Sam Jaffee, Frederick March,

(Continued on page 25)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Stagecoach

Screenplay by Dudley Nichols from a story "Stage to Lordsburg" by Ernest Haycox, directed by John Ford, photographed by Bert Glennon, musical score by Richard Hageman, Frank Harling, John Leipold and Leo Shuken. Produced by Walter Wanger, distributed by United Artists.

The Cast

Dallas	Claire Trevor
Ringo Kid	John Wayne
Buck	Andy Devine
Hatfield	John Carradine
Doc Boone	Thomas Mitchell
Curly Wilcox	George Bancroft
Lucy Mallory	Louise Platt
Mr. Peacock	Donald Meek
Mr. Gatewood	Burton Churchill
Cavalry Lieutenant	Tim Holt
Chris	Chris Martin
Yakeema	Elvira Rios
Sgt. Billy Pickett	Francis Ford
Luke Plummer	Tom Tyler

ON another page of this magazine Dudley Nichols tells something of what he as writer and John Ford as director were trying for in *Stagecoach*. They succeeded brilliantly. It is probably as enthralling a picture of the old West as was ever brought to the screen, because it brings things that are eternally delightful back out of the youth of the movies, with a freshness and vigor of something newly created. Stagecoaches, Indians, rescuing cavalry, are the Homeric stuff of the motion picture, and so are the outcast people of the old saloons, the gun-fighter, the girl of bedraggled finery, the gambler, the marshal, the drunkard who was once somebody. But it seems as though

the proper Homer had never come along to sing them till the matchless team of Ford and Nichols. They have the epic swing, the instinctive poetry of action, above all the technical mastery, that create the glamor of art and revivify once more the broken-down old horse opera.

Like any first-rate movie, *Stagecoach* is something to see and not to write about. Only in movies can the spectator be snatched from his seat and carried along with what he is watching, always physically close, with all his most vivid senses, to the heart of action. This movie does that—one is in that stagecoach, with those people, through that magnificent panorama of desert and hills, in dust, in cold, for every minute of the perilous flight to Lordsburg. And it is accomplished by going back to the soundest fundamentals of movie-making, always presenting something for the eye to watch, with words and musical score to complete the meaning and the feeling but never to supplant the visual picture.

That is why *Stagecoach* is something for the true movie-lover to see more than once: once, perhaps, for the story, again and yet again for delight in how the story is told. Skill, taste, artistic sophistication, have worked unerringly and unobtrusively here to create cinematic form at its best. And in the respectable re-birth of Westerns that seems to be upon us, it is extremely unlikely that anything nearer perfection in its line will come along than *Stagecoach*. Writing, direction, acting, photography, setting, music—all excellent, and all merging into perfect unity.—J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional.



Refugees after the final breakup of Czechoslovakia's defense

Crisis

Produced and directed by Herbert Klein, assisted by Hans Burger and Alexander Hackenschmid; commentary written by Vincent Sheean and spoken by Leif Erickson; musical score by H. W. Susskind and Jaroslav Harvan. Distributed by Arthur Mayer.

THIS is an eye-witness film of happenings in Czechoslovakia between Hitler's seizure of Austria, to add it to his Great Germany, and the pact made at Munich which forced the Czechoslovak Republic to yield to Hitler's demands. Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, that Bible of the Nazis which the Fuehrer is so consistently following in his career as saviour of Germany, is the villain of the drama, as Czechoslovakia is the heroine, but there is no rescuing hero at the end and the drama is a tragedy, a terrifically stirring and moving tragedy because obviously all the people in it are actual people, in actual places. It is what we have read in newspapers and heard over the radio, caught with a camera and put together for our eyes to see, far more vivid than words, whether written or spoken, could be.

There is no mistaking the attitude of the film toward its subject matter, and to that

extent—as a film definitely sympathetic to one side in a struggle—it is propaganda. It is also history, or perhaps rather one of the sources of history as the diary of a man in a beleaguered city might be a source of history. It does not go at all into any attempt to explain the forces that created Hitler and the Nazi party, or why Chamberlain and Daladier and Mussolini did what they did at Munich, or any of the other matters which, once they are broached, lead to endless and passionate confusions of speculation and controversy. It is simply a record of how Hitler's intentions, as outlined in his book, worked out on the people of Czechoslovakia when Czechoslovakia's turn came in the Hitler plan of action. It is as if, in *Macbeth*, we were shown the scene Shakespeare did not write, the actual murder of Duncan, and none of the rest of the play except a program. *Crisis* is a picture of Czechoslovakia being murdered.

The film begins with showing what Czechoslovakia was as a democracy, how it first felt the repercussions of the Austrian Anschluss, then how the Nazi technique operated in the activities of Henlein, on to the Czech mobilization and defiance of Hitler, the period of false security when the Ger-

man menace had been staved off, to the ultimate disillusionment when allies failed and the Czech Republic knew it was doomed. Most of this is presented through pictures of ordinary people in their daily lives in the Sudeten section. A few vivid maps show what Hitler was after in his progress of conquest toward the East, and how the German minorities in Czechoslovakia fared in comparison with German minorities in the other neighboring countries. There are also brief newsreel glimpses of figures on the outside concerned with the fate of the Czech nation—Hitler making world-shaking utterances, Lord Runciman alighting from England on his errand of adjustment, Chamberlain mounting the steps for his first interview with Hitler, the table in Munich on which was spread the map for Czechoslovakia's dismemberment.

Pictorially the film is superb, photographically and in the assembling of scenes. The musical score is eloquently fitting and effective. Vincent Sheean's spoken commentary is eloquent, too, reinforcing the pictures and sometimes giving that additional touch of editorial interpretation and emphasis which is the film's most obvious element of emotional partisanship. Of course there are emphases of a more subtle kind—the camera's habit, which could not have been accidental, of always catching the most attractive aspects of Czech childhood and youth, the sturdiest specimens of manhood, the most pathetic examples of old age and helplessness. Some of the news-shot selections are pretty pointed, too—Hitler shouting at his most raucously fanatical, the downy Lord Runciman emerging like a chicken out of its shell to decide the fate of nations, Mussolini's strut, and perhaps most strikingly revealing of all, Hitler's face as he lays his map before his Munich confreres, with its "There it is—so what?" expression. But those bits are authentic history, for the history books.

Crisis is certainly one of the most brilliant and powerful political documentary films yet made, a proof of what a superlative medium the motion picture is for handling events of contemporary history. Considering its subject matter it is remarkably impersonal, admirably adapted to presenting a concrete

situation to American audiences in the aspects most likely to win American sympathy and with the least likelihood of stirring up any prejudices except those ingrained American prejudices in favor of freedom. It is beautifully balanced and dramatic in arrangement, maturely restrained in its tone, whatever emotional overtones its content cannot escape having, and supremely important not only for what is objective in it—the specific series of events it pictures—but even more so for its implicit warning of what dangers such events portend for the civilized world. Lovers of peace and justice and democracy will respond to this film with all their hearts—they should also study it profoundly with their minds.—J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional.

A Book on the Use of Motion Pictures in Education

OUR daily mail indicates on the part of those outside the distinct province of education a wide and questioning interest in the place of the motion picture in education. To them we recommend a recent report prepared chiefly for educators but of equal value to those in the lay field who, because of their community motion picture activity, find it of importance to be informed regarding the film in education as well as the entertainment and recreational film. This report is not concerned alone with the educational film but deals also with the theatrical motion picture as a medium of indirect education. However the major portion of the motion picture study is given to the theory and practice of the non-theatrical film in the school.

It is one of the publications of The Regents' Inquiry Into the Character and Cost of Public Education in the State of New York entitled "Motion Pictures and Radio, Modern Technique for Education," and is the result of a special study made by Dr. Elizabeth Laine, a member of the research staff of the Inquiry. The first half

(Continued on page 25)

Motion Picture Week

AN idea originated in Chicago last year for a special Motion Picture Week. This idea when presented by Mrs. Richard M. McClure, President of the Better Films Council of Chicago, at the 1938 Conference of the National Board, with the thought that others might like to sponsor such a Week, was received with interest and later carried out in several communities under the sponsorship of local motion picture organizations.

Other Councils and like groups at the Conference this year expressed interest in participating in such an observance this spring. To aid these we will quote here from the original statement of Motion Picture Week as made last year at the Conference, and list some of the activities carried out, following this with some suggestions for this year.

In announcing Motion Picture Week to the 1938 Conference Mrs. McClure said: "The Film As It Influences Life, might well be chosen as the theme which underlies the observance of National Motion Picture Week from April 16th to 23rd. April seems a particularly significant month in film history. The first peep show was opened in New York City on April 14th, 1894. The real birthday of the motion picture as a form of entertainment was April 23rd, 1896 in Koster and Bial's Music Hall in New York. On April 2nd, 1902 the first motion picture theatre was opened for business in Los Angeles. April 14, 1914 noted the opening of the Strand Theatre in New York, the forerunner of the present day theatre. It is not intended that during National Motion Picture Week emphasis shall be placed upon motion picture attendance but rather on making those people who are regular patrons appreciate the privilege of attending the movies and at the same time develop a more discriminating mass audience."

A highlight of the Chicago observance was a luncheon given by the Council with John Balaban describing the history of motion picture theatre development in Chicago from the days of the first nickelodeons to the present picture palaces, J. J. Donahue, head

of Chicago distribution for Paramount Pictures, giving some interesting facts in supplying motion picture entertainment, and Rob Reel, motion picture critic of the Chicago American, telling how it feels to be a critic. Coincidental with the Week was the publication of a Chicago recreational survey by Arthur J. Todd, Chairman of the Department of Sociology of Northwestern University. Attention was drawn to the motion picture by publication of facts from the survey. Chicago has been making plans for a two day conference closing with a dinner this year. The cooperation of the schools, libraries the museums and the stores has been received and the program will include their activity as well as that of the clubs. There will be exhibits, a radio broadcast, a display of visual education activity.

The Cleveland Cinema Club arranged a comprehensive demonstration which served to bring the work of the Cinema Club as it touches the many interests of the public before the community. The program, in addition to a meeting of the Cinema Club and a banquet attended by the mayor and many other notables in the city, held sessions in various auditoriums demonstrating the work of the universities and schools of the city. Museums and libraries cooperated as did the churches and department stores.

The Metropolitan Motion Picture Council of New York City has a Motion Picture Week Committee and among the suggestions outlined for 1939 observance by this Council there may be some practical for use by other groups and so we give them here:

This Committee in order to be in agreement with the spring date chosen by the originators of Motion Picture Week, agreed upon April 17th to 23rd as the week for their observance.

Emphasis should be put during this Week on especially appropriate Saturday morning junior programs with as general participation as possible, since this is the day the year-around when attention and patronage is given to such programs, and attention would thus be called to their importance.

Interest was expressed by members of the

Committee in having other sample ideal junior programs including specially recommended features and particularly informational shorts. It was suggested that programs might be planned which had both entertainment and educational qualities.

It was suggested that particular stress be put at this time upon motion picture appreciation courses in the colleges and the schools, with demonstrations of their activities. This would include in addition to the study of motion picture appreciation courses in motion picture production, motion picture writing, motion pictures in the foreign language department, etc. Although all communities do not have colleges they do have schools, and if motion picture appreciation is not a part of the school activity this should be the aim.

It was pointed out that the exhibition of a feature picture followed by a discussion by school pupils or adult club members had been made part of a very successful public program and therefore might be recommended to groups for Motion Picture Week.

Youth's part and interest can be also emphasized during this Week through securing the cooperation of the Scouts and other youth groups.

The libraries have been most cooperative in tie-up with the motion picture in many communities and, it was felt, will be more than willing to give their especial cooperation in Motion Picture Week observances, such as in the preparing of exhibits, book-marks, lists of related reading, the showing of "stills," etc.

Suggestion was made that a model library of interesting and informative books and periodicals for study and reading on the motion picture be compiled.

The clubs of the National Federation of Music Clubs can be counted upon for active cooperation. Although the observance comes a short time before National Music Week, at which time the Music Clubs throughout the country stress the films related to music, it is believed that they will be willing to lend their support to any tie-up between music and motion pictures during Motion Picture Week.

The use of the motion picture in the church service and in religious education should be demonstrated through securing the

cooperation of the different church groups.

It was pointed out that many people do not know the numerous ways in which the motion picture is used and this Week should give them information on this—the use in business, in the government, etc.

All of the cultural organizations of the community such as museums and institutions should be asked to take part by showing at that time any ways in which motion pictures are used in their activities.

Lecturers from the various organizations in the community having a motion picture interest can be called upon to take part in a Conference. That is, from the schools, the churches, the theatres, libraries, newspapers, civic groups, etc.

Any radio program dealing with motion pictures might be called upon for help in bringing the idea of this Week to public attention.

The Welfare organizations and community centers often use motion pictures in their activity, this could be stressed at this time.

Some theatres might have "open house" at an hour when they were not playing a picture to show interested groups the mechanics of the projection booth, screen, etc.

A graphic chart might be made showing the various educational and entertainment motion picture services, and their relation to one another.

The suggestion was made that empty stores be used for the placing of placards and broadsides to bring this Week particularly to the attention of passers-by. It was felt that this was a good idea not only for Motion Picture Week but for year-around use as a means of bringing the work of the Councils and particularly their support of children's programs to many parents who might otherwise fail to get this information.

It was suggested that motion picture critics and editors be approached about the Week in expectation of their cooperative interest. It was stated that they had given particular help in publicising the very successful observance last year in Cleveland.

The idea was expressed that the purpose of the Week should be made very clear, as some communities might be prevented from successfully putting over any extensive observance if the various community agencies

misunderstanding the purpose would withhold cooperation.

The program can be in the main an intensifying of regular year-around contact activity, high-lighted in such a way as to bring greater attention to the work of the sponsoring group in the community.

The Week will thus serve to indicate the wide use of the motion picture in the community and the central clearing-house position of the local Council, which makes it possible for one group to see what another is doing and offers its continued assistance in further developing motion picture use and activity.

A Non-theatrical Film Directory

THE "Directory of U. S. Government Films" recently compiled by the United States Film Service Division of the National Emergency Council fills a need in giving in one publication up-to-date information on the various government films. The listing is by subject arrangement under each department. For example, information on a forest conservation film will be found under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation heading or one on steel under the Bureau of Mines of the Department of Interior.

Information on whether the films are sound or silent, 16 or 35mm and the number of reels is, of course, included with the addresses of the Washington offices and various branch offices where films can be secured. There is no rental charge for government films but users are asked to pay transportation charges.

The address of the U. S. Film Service Division of the National Emergency Council is Commercial Building, 14th and G Streets, N. W., Washington, D. C., where other helpful service in addition to the directory may be secured.

IF you have not received a copy of the listing of "Publications and Services" of the Board, we suggest writing for it, as it lists a number of items due you with your Magazine subscription if desired and you may want them.

Casting a Picture

(Continued from page 19)

Franchot Tone, Madge Evans, Vincent Price, Elinor Linn, Helen Westley, Barry Fitzgerald, and a dozen more. They'll all tell you that they owe their success in pictures to their stage experience. It can't be over-rated.

A Book on Motion Pictures in Education

(Continued from page 22)

of the book is devoted to the motion picture and covers such subjects as The Role of the Motion Picture Theatre, Production, Distribution and Cost of Non-theatrical Motion Pictures, Adaptation of Motion Pictures in Education, and Role of the State in an Educational Motion Picture Program. The latter half considers the radio.

Published by McGraw-Hill Book Company. Price \$1.75.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

- f LET FREEDOM RING—Nelson Eddy, Virginia Bruce, Edward Arnold, Lionel Barrymore. Original screen story by Ben Hecht. Directed by Jack Conway. A partly historical (perhaps partly allegorical), story of the ruthless ways of railroad builders in the earlier western days, stirring in the melodramatic style of western pictures, and a distinctly patriotic element, culminating in a triumph of Americanism over greed and violence. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj LITTLE PRINCESS, THE—Shirley Temple, Richard Greene, Anita Louise. Based on story "Sara Crewe" by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Directed by Walter Lang. The children's classic about the little girl who went from riches to rags in a boarding school, with the Boer War and Queen Victoria to bring everything out all right in the end. A nice picture in Technicolor. 20th Century-Fox.
- f MADE FOR EACH OTHER—Carole Lombard, James Stewart. Screen story by Jo Swerling and Rose Franken. Directed by John Cromwell. A story of young married life, amusing and touching, simple and hu-

man in its incidents, with the sort of crisis that might happen in any family. Particularly moving performances by James Stewart and Carole Lombard. United Artists.

- f MED FOLKET FOR FOSTERLANDET (With the People for the Country)—Sigurd Wallen. Original screen story by Eric Lindorm. Directed by Sigurd Wallen. A cavalcade of Sweden, covering the last thirty years and showing how national and international events affected the lives of a group of people. Interesting historically. In Swedish, with English subtitles. Recommended for schools and libraries. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.

- f MY WIFE'S RELATIVES—James Gleason. Original screen story by Stuart McGowan. Directed by Gus Meins. Mr. Higgins finds life very difficult trying to keep his family happy. He helps his daughter to marry the boy she loves and keeps his wife's father from marrying a designing widow. Republic.

- f NEVER SAY DIE—Martha Raye, Bob Hope. Based on play by William H. Post. Directed by Elliott Nugent. An amusing story of two people who marry each other to avoid marrying their respective fiancées. A little vulgar in spots, but entertaining. Paramount.

- f OFF THE RECORD—Pat O'Brien, Joan Blondell, Bobby Jordan. Screen story by Saul Elkins and Sally Sandlin. Directed by James Flood. How a young married couple gave a kid with a bad record a new interest and start in life. A combination of newspaper story and crime story, with the accent on decent people helping out someone who hadn't had a fair chance. Enlightened with plenty of humor. Warner Bros.

- f OKLAHOMA KID, THE—James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, Priscilla Lane. Original screen story by E. E. Parramore and Wally Klein. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. A superior Western, concerned with the settling of Tulsa, and the attempts by the adventurous, wayward son of its leading citizen to supplement law-enforcement with extra-legal help. Cagney on horseback is an engaging figure, and the film is a brisk and exciting piece of its type. Warner Bros.

- f SAINT STRIKES BACK, THE—George Sanders, Wendy Barrie, Jerome Cowan. The Saint continues his lively career of helping the police bring criminals to justice. This time in San Francisco. RKO Radio.

- f SECRET SERVICE OF THE AIR—Ronald Reagan, John Littel. Original screen story by Raymond Schrock. Directed by Noel Smith. An adventure film, based on actual secret service data, dealing with the smug-

gling of aliens across the Mexican border. Plenty of action. Warner Bros.

- f SOCIETY SMUGGLERS—Preston Foster, Irene Hervey. Original screen story by Arthur Herman and Earle Fenton. Directed by Joe May. A story of diamond smugglers who have a clever and unique way of bringing diamonds into the country. The interest is well sustained throughout. Universal.

- fj SPIRIT OF CULVER—Jackie Cooper, Freddie Bartholomew. Original screen story by George Green and Tom Buckingham. Directed by Joseph Santley. A story of a boy given a scholarship at Culver Military Academy because of his father's war record. Hating the discipline the boy rebels until he finally realizes the advantages. Complications arise, but the boy overcomes them and is a hero to his classmates. Universal.

- f *STAGECOACH—See Exceptional Photoplay Dept., page 20.

- f SUDDEN MONEY—Charles Ruggles, Marjorie Rambeau. Based on play by Milton Lazarus. Directed by Nick Grinde. An amusing comedy of what happens to a middle class family when they win the sweepstakes. In the end they lose their money and are right back where they started from. Paramount.

- f TAIL SPIN—Alice Faye, Constance Bennett, Nancy Kelly. Original screen play by Frank Mead. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. Girl airplane racers, among whom a society girl rivals professionals. They all, after trouble and disasters, learn a good deal about human nature regardless of social distinctions. 20th Century-Fox.

- f WIFE HUSBAND AND FRIEND—Loretta Young, Warner Baxter, Binnie Barnes. Novel by James M. Cain. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. A young wife thinks she's good enough to be a great singer—the husband with the help of an opera star fights fire with fire—becomes a singer himself, and in the end all singing careers are dropped. Light and amusing. 20th Century-Fox.

- f WINGS OF THE NAVY—George Brent, John Payne, Olivia de Havilland, Frank McHugh. Original screen story by Michael Fessier. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. A story of the naval aviation school in Pensacola, full of the fascination of flying and the risks of training, with an extremely tense climax of plane testing by stunt pilots. The slight but draggy love story could well have been omitted. Warner Bros.

- m YES MY DARLING DAUGHTER—Jeffrey Lynn, Priscilla Lane, Fay Bainter. Based on play by Mark Reed. Directed by Wil-

liam Keighley. A comedy about a mother confronted with a daughter's romance somewhat duplicating her own, which conventional married life has made her forget. Situations that might have been questionable handled in good taste, and the whole thing kept on a bright level of comedy. First National.

- fj **YOU CAN'T CHEAT AN HONEST MAN**—W. C. Fields, Charlie McCarthy, Edgar Bergen. Original screen story by Charles Bogle (W. C. Fields). Directed by George Marshall. A highly amusing story of a circus owner's trials and tribulations, not the least of which is the incorrigible Charlie McCarthy who is more like a human being than a dummy, the love element is unimportant and then there is "Mortimer" Charlie's rival dummy. Plenty of good laughs. Universal.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- f **ANGERMANLAND** (The Province of Angermanland, Sweden)—An interesting trip through the Province of Angermanland in Sweden. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f **GOING PLACES NO. 59**—WPA project of reproducing Indian handicraft; Lairo. Universal.
- f **GOING PLACES NO. 60**—The Tennessee Tweetsie, a mountain railroad; a collection of armour. Universal.
- f **GOING PLACES NO. 61**—The beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro. Universal.
- fj **GOLD**—An interesting account of gold-mining in the old Western days and today. RKO Radio.
- fj **HEROES AT LEISURE**—Undersea hunters in the Pacific, divers who go down for abalone, etc. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **HOLD YOUR BREATH** (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A track-meet under water. Most interesting. Paramount.
- fj **ICE ANTICS**—Skating, exemplified particularly by some of the superlative young skaters. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **I SOL OCH SNO** (In Sun and Snow in Sweden)—A beautiful scenic. Commentary in Swedish. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- fj **IMPERIAL DELHI**—A good Fitzpatrick Travel-talk in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj ***MARCH OF TIME NO. 7, THE (5th Series)**—One section discloses the results of President Cardenas' socialistic ideals and aims in Mexico, the second how the Boy Scout movement tries to foster the spirit of democracy. RKO Radio.
- f **MED KANOT TILL LAPPLANDS FJALL** (With Canoe in Lapland Mountains)—A canoe trip into the Lapland mountains. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- fj **MYSTIC SIAM**—An interesting and colorful Magic Carpet visit to Siam and its temples. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 7**—A Mexican rodeo; raising pheasants; the making of accordians. Paramount.
- f **PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 8**—Making gold leaf; the annual migration of sheep to Uncle Sam's grazing ranges. Paramount.
- fj **POINTS ON POINTERS**—How hunting dogs are trained. Vitaphone.
- f **POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 4**—A stream-line bank; household gadgets; study of flood conditions; testing new cars; modern way of growing grass; training men for the submarine service. Paramount.
- f **REPUBLIC OF PANAMA**—Color cruises. A visit to Panama. Paramount.
- f **SILVER**—Silver mining and manufacture in Sweden. Commentary in Swedish. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f **SPORTING IRISH, THE** (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—The Irish in such sports as road bowling, fox hunting and the game of hurling. Paramount.

- f **STORMANNABRUK** (Old Swedish Iron and Steel Works)—With the commentary all in Swedish this would interest only those familiar with the language. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.

- f ***STORY OF ALFRED NOBEL, THE** (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade Series)—An unusually interesting account of the great Swedish scientist, who discovered dynamite and perfected it for the good of mankind, only to see it put to the uses of warfare, and his attempts to devote his fortune to counteracting the effects of his invention. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 59**—Wood lighter than cork; orange picking by music; a costly and complete miniature electric railroad; a doll house erected over the grave of a small girl; a scientific pipe that even the girls enjoy smoking. Universal.

- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 60**—A small crippled boy with a mechanical mind; the only woman postman; animal sculpturer; a private cat-walk from the second story to the back fence; a strong man; the narrow little house on Bedford Street, the Village; Table salt used by an artist to make pictures. Universal.

- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 61**—A strange use for burnt matches; a make-up bar; a strange job for a woman; a clever young dog trainer; a big lighthouse in the middle of Key West; a tailor who aspires to higher things than pressing suits. Universal.

- f **THAT'S AFRICA**—A trip through the desert area of Africa, showing the strange habits of some of the natives. Paramount.

- fj **VIKING TRAIL, THE**—A Magic Carpet of Movietone—interesting and beautiful. 20th Century-Fox.

- f **WASHINGTON PARADE, THE, NO. 2**—Inside the White House—A trip through the White House and into the Executive offices. Very interesting. Columbia.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f **CIRCUS CO-ED**—Showing a school where they train circus people. Paramount.

- f **DREAM OF LOVE, A**—A gentle and pretty musical episode, built on how Franz Liszt came to write his very popular Liebestraum. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **HIGH PERIL**—One of Floyd Gibbons' real-life adventures, about a worker rescued from a high chimney. Vitaphone.

- fj **LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE (Serial) NOS. 1-5**—Robert Livingston. Screen story by Sol Schor and Barry Shipman. Directed by William Witney and John English. A story of the early West, and the struggles of the cattle barons to keep homesteaders from cutting up the grazing land into small holdings. The Lone Ranger and his Indian friend and white horse, Silver, are on hand in defense of the wronged and oppressed. Republic.

- f **SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 5**—Film folk at Catalina Island. Columbia.

Cartoons and Comedies

- fj **ALWAYS KICKIN'**—A cartoon in technicolor. How a donkey saves a little bird from a vulture. Paramount.

- f **BIRTH OF A TOOTHPICK, THE**—In love with a tree he calls Sylvia, a man follows the tree to a toothpick factory just in time to get the first toothpick which is cut and which he fondly calls "Sylvia". Universal.

- fj **CUSTOMERS WANTED** (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye and his rival have trouble over their penny arcades. Paramount.

- fj **MY FRIEND THE MONKEY** (Betty Boop Cartoon)—Pudgy's nose is out of joint when Betty buys a monkey for his playfellow. Para.

- fj ***POINTER, THE**—A Disney cartoon, in which Mickey tries to make a hunting dog of Pluto. RKO Radio.

- fj **ROBIN HOOD MAKES GOOD**—An amusing cartoon in color about three squirrels and a fox. Vitaphone.

- f **SMALL TOWN IDOL, A**—One of Mack Sennett's most famous Keystone comedies, shortened. It contains such one-time stars as Ben Turpin, Phyllis Haver, Marie Prevost and Ramon Novarro. Vitaphone.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c

Special Film Lists10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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April, 1939



Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon in "Wuthering Heights" (see page 16)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

- fj **ALMOST A GENTLEMAN**—James Ellison, Helen Wood. Original screen story by Harold Shumate. Directed by Lewis Goodwins. Mostly about a dog, of mixed breed, who proved to be better than a thoroughbred. There is a bit of romance mingled with it, and a melodramatic finish, but both those elements are completely overshadowed by the dog and his master. RKO Radio.
- f **BLONDIE MEETS THE BOSS**—Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake. Based on comic strip created by Chic Young. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. A jolly, light comedy about a young man and his wife, his baby, his dog and his job. The job is the crucial thing in this episode of their life, but much of the fun comes from the baby and the dog. Columbia.
- f ***CHALLENGE, THE**—Luis Trenker, Robert Douglas. Original screen story by Emeric Pressburger. Directed by Milton Rosmer. A beautiful and thrilling picture of the first successful ascent of the Matterhorn, based on facts but given a personal conflict to heighten its drama. Recommended for schools and libraries. (British Production). Film Alliance of the U. S.
- m ***DARK VICTORY** — Bette Davis, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald. Play by George Emerson Brew, Jr., and Bertram Block. Directed by Edmund Goulding. An unusual and powerful film about a girl threatened inescapably with death, and her emotional and spiritual adjustment to her fate. Supremely well done in almost every respect, but notable most of all for the superb acting of Bette Davis. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Warner Bros.
- f **DU GAMLA DU FRIA** (Sweden, Thou Old, Thou Free)—Sigurd Wallen, Karin Ekelund. Original screen story by Ted Berthels. Directed by Gunnar Olsson. A Swedish-American's return, with his niece, to the land of his birth—the girl remains there, but he returns to the land of his adoption. Entirely in Swedish, it is full of sentiment and humor for those who understand the language. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- fj **FLYING IRISHMAN, THE**—Douglas Corrigan, Paul Kelly, Robert Armstrong. Original screen story by Ernest Pagano and Dalton Trumbo. Directed by Leigh Jason. How Corrigan, in spite of a lot of discouragements and set-backs, made his wrong-way flight to Ireland to convince an aviation company he was qualified to be a pilot. Interesting because of what one feels to be its general truth to facts. RKO Radio.
- f ***HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE**—Basil Rathbone, Richard Greene, Wendy Barrie. Novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Directed by Sidney Lanfield. A swell picturing of the Sherlock Holmes story of the eerie and tragic happenings on the moors of Dartmoor, excellent in atmosphere, acting and all that a good mystery demands. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **I'M FROM MISSOURI**—Bob Burns, Gladys George. Based on stories by Homer Croy and Julian Street. Directed by Theodore Reed. Most amusing comedy. A man from Missouri goes to England to sell mules for the British army. In London his wife entertains the aristocrats in order to aid her husband in his business transactions and to marry her daughter to a title. Clever dialogue, good acting and altogether a satisfactory picture. Paramount.
- f **ICE FOLLIES OF 1939, THE**—Joan Crawford, James Stewart, Lew Ayres. Original screen story by Leonard Praskins. Directed by Reinhold Schunzel. A pleasing combination of ice carnival and love story, the latter involving two young people whose careers interfere for a time with their romance. The skating sequences are both entertaining and attractive, particularly an ice ballet in color that is exceptionally lovely. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- m **LET US LIVE**—Henry Fonda, Maureen O'Sullivan, Alan Baxter. Original screen-story by Joseph F. Dineen. Directed by John Brahm. Columbia. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. "Murder in Massachusetts" page 20.
- m ***LOVE AFFAIR**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 17.

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The Neely Bill

AT the recent hearing in Washington on the Neely Bill (S.280 and H.R. 145) before the Senate Interstate Commerce Sub-committee, the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was represented by Dr. Russell Potter, Associate Director, Columbia University Extension, in charge of the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Division of Film Study, and a member of the Board's General Committee and Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Because of the interest of many of our readers in this bill designed to prohibit "compulsory block-booking" and "blind selling" we quote here in part from Dr. Potter's statement, which gives you the viewpoint of the National Board of Review on this subject, as expressed by one who speaks from an interest and knowledge of the film both in the theatre and as part of a university study.

"The organization which I represent is not here to present any case for or against the trade practices of the industry since we believe that this is a problem essentially contractual for the industry to settle itself. The solution of such problems, we are informed in the press, is now under negotiation by representative committees of producers, distributors and exhibitors, or may be adjudicated by the courts.

"But our organization is interested—vitaly interested—in the freedom of the screen, and in the cultural and educational value of the best possible pictures which can be produced for the American people. This, and this only, is what the National Board of Review has stood for during the past quarter

century and this standard, this tradition, this belief is what leads the National Board now to say most emphatically that this Bill will not contribute one iota to a finer, freer and more intelligent American screen. In this Bill there is more than immediately meets the eye. . . .

"That Senator Neely's Bill is more than it pretends to be is best indicated by the following passage of his report to the Senate last year, in referring to the manner in which the motion picture industry has solved through self-regulation the problem of decency and good morals on the screen. Senator Neely said, and I quote from his report:

"The recent reformation is purely voluntary and there is no assurance that present imperfect standards will be maintained if this legislation is not passed. Experience teaches that, as a rule, such reforms are sporadic, induced by outbursts of public indignation and are of short duration. . . ."

"If this is the position to be adopted by the Congress of the United States, we might as well scrap all the processes of democracy in American industry and American life. If reformation or self-regulation is to be suspect because it is voluntary, no industry is safe.

"What you are asked to do is to substitute the responsibility of industry to keep its own house in order by legislative "verboten" and bureaucracy. No statement could argue more cynically against the freedom of the press, the freedom of the air and the free-

(Continued on page 20)

Music in the Motion Picture

By DAVID MENDOZA

Mr. Mendoza who is Musical Director of Warner Bros. Vitaphone Studios, delivered this address at the annual Conference of the National Board, in the series on "The Making of a Motion Picture."

WHILE coming here I turned over in my mind just what you might be interested in hearing. It struck me that the best procedure to follow would be to go right back to the beginning of movies, of music in movies.

I presume that most of you here remember the old nickette or nickelodeon, where you paid your nickel and watched the picture which ran from 15 to 20 minutes. Then you went out and tried another one. At least, that was my first experience with movies. I was taken there by my violin teacher; at the time I think I was about seven or eight years old.

In these nickettes there was a pianist, if you could call him that. He played while the movie was in progress, hurried music when there was excitement, in the minor key when it was sad, and usually a waltz when it was neutral. Finally, this was augmented by adding a drum, and then a trumpet, and eventually the movie orchestra became an accepted fact.

Later, I became a member of the New York Symphony Orchestra. I was with them for about three years. As yet I was not interested in movies other than to wile away an hour or two when I had nothing better to do.

One day I was walking down Broadway and I passed the Strand Theatre. It had been just completed. I saw a huge sign outside advertising, "25 piece orchestra." I scoffed and said, "That is impossible. They cannot possibly pay it. It cannot be a success. What are they going to do? What are they going to play?"

It was only two years later that I was won over to taking a position at the Rialto Theatre, which was then under the direction of S. L. Rothapfel, whom I think you all remember as Roxy. I went in there as a

violinist, concert master of the orchestra, and I had my first experience in the movies.

In those days we played an overture, then the newsreel went on, which was scored, and finally the feature. There was a library of music in the theatre which was composed of *agitatos*, *andantes*, *pathetiques*, and so forth. Mr. Hugo Riesenfeld was then musical director. The process of scoring a picture in those days was quite different from what we know it to be today.

From there I moved to the Capitol Theatre. In connection with that I would like to call to your attention the reason why I entered the movies. I was born in New York City, my parents were born here, and I was born with a love for music. I wanted to conduct and I wanted to conduct very badly. There was no place for me to do this except in a movie house, so I joined the forces of the Rialto Theatre and eventually became a conductor.

I think most of you may remember the history of the music we produced at the Capitol Theatre. This also brought me into close contact with Roxy and I began to score pictures with him and for him. Still, in those days we were limited to the use of what we called a printed library of music.

Time went on and there came in what was then known as the super-special, to wit, pictures like *The Big Parade*, *Ben Hur*; pictures of that magnitude. Of course, we started then to write original music. This began to make demands upon us quite removed from what we had been brought up to exercise formerly. I was then in association with Dr. William Axt who worked with me at the theatre. We produced one score after another, *Big Parade*, *Mare Nostrum*, *La Boheme*, and *The Merry Widow*; all outstanding features. Sometimes we would spend as much as a month in preparation for one of these scores.

A very amusing incident occurred at that time which will be a good point to recall later. The picture *La Boheme* came in. What music were we to use? Obviously *La*

Boheme. We went to see Mr. Maxwell, the manager of Ricordi, publisher of all Italian operas, and explained what we wanted. He said, "Nothing doing. Not a note. You use one note and I will sue you for—well, for enough." There we were with *La Boheme* to be scored and we could not use Puccini. What were we going to do? I knew the audience was going to expect Puccini's music. Well, we did use Puccini but nobody could say anything. Mr. Maxwell came to the opening night with his secretary

for us, as we thought. Then a picture came in called *White Shadows of the South Seas*. It was given to me to score and then to record. I scored it, and we went to Camden to the Victor plant, and we recorded it in the old church in Camden, New Jersey.

In those days when I scored a picture and conducted it, when the actual performance came I would shade my music in accordance with what I felt. In the second or third reel of that picture there was a shot of a boat slowly coming into the harbor in a dimly lighted scene, a very low key of lighting, hazy, foggy, and on this boat was nothing but dead bodies. I suppose that some of you remember that. Naturally, I had a very eerie type of music, and when I recorded it I played it as I would in the theatre. The next day we heard the "rushes" of sound. When it came to the record of this particular scene there wasn't a sound on the record.

We were presented with a new problem, the technical problem of recording music for pictures. We had to learn not only how to write and conduct for pictures but how to record for pictures. At that time the record was used. We did not know anything about recording on film. Then the problem of change-over came. You did not know as you sat in the theatre those days that the operator had to watch for a certain point on that record and when that came he had to throw a switch to start the next record going. If he did not do it in time, or if he did it too soon, you were auditorily aware that something had happened.

I did the *Don Juan* score for Warner Bros. at that time. At the opening night I do not know what was wrong with the operator, but when it came to the end of a reel my poor music suffered badly.

Finally the talkies came and it seemed that that was the end of all of my aspirations. By that time I had become very enthusiastic. I felt that the intensification, or the dramatization, of human emotions picturized on the silver screen by the medium of music, was an art, and I started to write a book on it. I was argued against by some of my contemporaries, but I went on.

Then the musical picture began to come in. Suddenly we found an influx, or an outflux, of composers of Tin Pan Alley going to the Coast—gold had been found. A year



Mr. Mendoza conducting a recording orchestra

and every once in a while as I was conducting, as I later found out, he would listen and say, "Ha?"—then, "No!"

You see there is a way of plagiarizing and we used it. We took the idiom of Puccini, we took the "Musette" waltz and we rewrote it. Puccini would probably not have recognized it, but everybody who heard it said it was Puccini.

Suddenly there was the advent of sound. *The Jazz Singer* was born. Sound pictures were here. That was the end of everything

later I went to the Coast, and a month after I arrived I was told the gold rush was over, and there I was in Hollywood. I then began to realize and to find out what the business of making motion pictures was comprised of. There were many periods of discouragement. I was made to feel that music was not important, as I had felt it, but I kept on.

A picture eventually was made, called *Outward Bound*. I imagine most of you remember it. I had the honor to score that picture. In it was a scene where the ship arrives at the Port of Heaven, and there was a beautiful impressionistic shot. I did something there I had never done in my life before, I went to great extremes for something I felt. I made music with about six flutes, two harps and a celeste. It wasn't music, it was a series of harmonies blended and unblended. I was lucky, the effect was just what I wanted. I wonder how many of you remember that.

I began giving very serious thought, then, to what music really means to the motion picture. I knew and I felt that importance every time I went to a theatre, as the opening title music would go on, and would continue on through the cast of characters, the credits, and finally in the opening scene. In many cases, where I had written original music from the beginning to the end, I would sit at the preview, shivering and shaking, wondering whether it was good. Many times I would meet somebody and I would ask them, "How did you like the music?" "Well, I didn't notice it." That was rather discouraging.

I do not think any of you are conscious of music in a picture. I finally realized that you must not be conscious of it. It is not important, and yet all important.

It is very difficult for me to convey to you what I feel is the real purpose of music in the dramatic film. If you notice it, it is diverting your attention from the picture, from the story, from the acting. Then again, if you do not notice it, how do we know it is good? How do we know it is what it should be?

Finally, as years went on, men of outstanding ability as composers began to be attracted to the work of scoring for the motion picture. There is one young man out on the Coast right now whom I deem a genius

in that work. His name is Max Steiner. Today when the name of Max Steiner goes on the screen it goes on alone in huge letters. I think he has achieved marvelous results and success. Do you remember the picture *Jezebel*? He did things in there which were startlingly outstanding.

It still occurs to me occasionally to wonder whether the amount of work entailed in the writing and the preparation of a motion picture score is really worth while, but I keep on. I am keeping on. I have one very serious hope; that is that the really, truly great composing talent in music will some day be attracted to the work of writing for the motion picture. Not every motion picture offers that opportunity or attractiveness.

Then there remains the question of how this is to be achieved. How is it to be handled? What will be my particular relationship in this particular type of work.

I have begun to feel like the director of the picture, and my ambition is to be able to call upon this or that composer or arranger and do for the picture what I feel is necessary for it. I am thankful for all the experience I have had, and I feel conceited enough to think that I am imbued with the feeling of what to do for a picture and what not to do.

There are many times when a picture is scored and I feel it should not be. Many times while I was on the Coast a picture would be made and I would be called in and asked to score it from beginning to end. Why? "It is slow, it is dead, it does not move." There may have been an absence of dialogue in certain scenes, or the producer felt the picture died at a certain point, and therefore he wanted to put music in there.

That is not the purpose of music in pictures. Music cannot make a picture, it can only help it. I feel music in many cases should be just a frame, a very thin-like frame, while in other cases it should be used to intensify dramatic action, or to serve the purpose of tying over, bringing to your unconscious ear a reminiscent idea. I could go on indefinitely as to what I feel music should do, and does do, for the picture if cleverly and capably handled.

Now we come to a point which lies very close to my heart. Mr. Stokowski is doing

(Continued on page 11)

The Right and Wrong of Direction

By DUDLEY MURPHY

From an address delivered at the National Board Annual Conference. Mr. Murphy is director of "The Emperor Jones," "One Third of a Nation" and other films.

BEFORE discussing some of a director's problems I should like to tell you a few things about the making of my picture, *The Emperor Jones*, one of the few films that gave me real satisfaction to direct. I am going to talk about it because I believe the story of its growth is directly connected with right and wrong methods of making a motion picture.

Emperor Jones started from an idea. It was in the early stages of the sound film, and I felt that the sound effect—the percussive effect of a drum beating on the character of Jones when he is lost in the jungle—was an idea of sufficient interest to form the nucleus of a movie. My first move was to get in touch with the author of the original play, Mr. O'Neill, and through an introduction from one of my friends I met him, explained my idea and secured an option.

The first real problem to be faced was that *Emperor Jones* was not a subject that I could handle with a major studio. I could not find any producer who was willing to make it. So I had to promote the production much as a stage production is promoted. I had to find money from someone who had faith in my subject. I met John Krinsky and Gifford Cochran who had just been successful in their exhibition of the imported *Maedchen in Uniform*. They wanted to make a movie, and we got together.

I got Du Bose Heyward, who wrote *Porgy* and *Mamba's Daughters*, and we sat down and developed the play. This was necessary because the original was only one act in length and we were obliged to build back into the life and character of Jones, taking him from his start in life as a young negro in the Gulla country around South Carolina, showing his career as a Pullman porter, and bringing him to Harlem where he got into trouble. Next, his confinement in a chain-gang and his escape to the island. Then we got into the play itself.



Dudley Murphy, National Board Conference speaker

When the manuscript was completed we, in fear and trepidation, went down to see Mr. O'Neill. He sat and listened to our treatment, and when we reached the point where we started in on the play, he said: "I hope you have taken as many liberties with the play itself as you have with the development of the first part"—which pleased us very much. But from there on we had followed the play as written.

I have told you all this because it is a case of one of the most important things in directing a motion picture—a chance to develop an idea from the start with the writer. This is a policy I have tried to follow ever since, but I have found as a rule one is forced to accept a manuscript as is, with no chance for change and development.

The right way to make a picture, the way the top directors are able to employ, is briefly this:

First, an idea comes to the director, an idea he feels is cinematic and wants to transfer to the screen because he feels it is something he has to say. Then he must get a writer, or be given one by the producer, a

writer who feels along the same lines as himself and feels equally stimulated by the idea. Together they develop the story. They do their best to consult with the photographer, art director, and sound man, and finally lay out the whole plan exactly as the director is going to execute it.

Now let us consider the wrong way—the way usually taken so as to ensure that the studio's programme is kept up to schedule. This wrong way means that the director is handed a script often only a couple of days before he is to start work on it—a deplorable method because no time can be spent on the development of ideas and consultations before shooting begins. What with his time limit and the expenses ahead of him, the director is obliged to go to work without preliminaries of any kind.

This is one important reason why so many pictures from major studios bear a stamp of similarity—they come out of a mill.

It is the very opposite element, namely individual style, that makes the work of the top directors important. These directors are usually able to follow the procedure I have described as the right one, and it shows in everything they turn out. After all, the director is, or should be, the outstanding personality in the making of a film, and the public should be able to know his style just as it knows the styles of its favorite playwrights and novelists. We connect the name of Alfred Hitchcock with melodrama, but melodrama significant for the bold way he breaks a dramatic scene in the middle by cutting to underplayed comedy and so heightening the tension when he returns to it. We know Lubitsch by his weakness for a Continental setting — smart, sophisticated and full of comedy. We know his characteristic handling of this material, his lightness of touch, his tempo, his indirect underplaying of action, his fondness for using doors and exits. The same special selection of material and treatment enables us to recognize directors like Capra, René Clair, Renoir and John Ford.

The sad thing is that these names are so few. Owing to present production methods we rarely are able to find any distinctive style in the large majority of pictures.

It is my belief that independent produc-

tion is the only possible salvation for the motion picture. Men like Capra and Hitchcock are established producer-directors—they make their pictures on their own with a writer. The goal for the future must be for the big studios to contract directors for two or three pictures a year and let them go to work independently—rather than throw a bunch of them together, fifty at a time, all working under the same supervision. Only stereotyped work can result from the latter method.

My latest film *One-Third of a Nation*, was made in Astoria, Long Island, and I would like to say something about the advantages of working away from Hollywood. I believe, on the whole, that one finds more freshness and originality. Ideas are fresher, and when the day's work is done, director, writers and actors have a chance to relax in everyday surroundings with an ordinary life going on around them. In Hollywood one walks out into the same world of movies, and conversation revolves around the latest movies and formulae for movies.

One finds it possible also when near New York to take advantage of the many young and talented actors playing on the legitimate stage. These newcomers have no wish to break up a stage career by going to Hollywood, but they have no objection to film work in the immediate neighborhood and their presence adds another important element of freshness.

Finally, I would remind you that the United States is the only country in which pictures are not made in the center of the legitimate theater. English pictures are made in London suburbs, and the same applies in Paris and Berlin. In America, pictures are made 3,000 miles away from the theater!

The opening up of such ideas as I have sketched briefly here will, I am sure, do much to help a breakaway from the standardized film. Mr. Dudley Nichols mentioned at this Conference* the need for a fairer deal for the writer, and I believe that what I have said from the director's point-of-view echoes the same need for the remedying of defects and staleness in film production.

*National Board of Review Magazine, March, 1939.

Sound in the Motion Picture

By REEVE O. STROCK

This address was made at the annual Conference of the National Board of Review by Mr. Strock, who is Sound Director of the Eastern Service Studios.

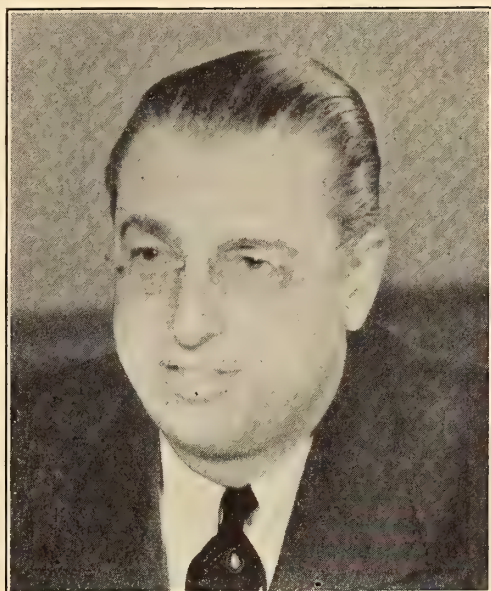
WHEN sound on film was generally introduced in motion pictures it changed many things and brought many new problems. It created an entirely new department. The most important change was in the size of the picture. A place had to be found on the film for the sound track and it was placed along the edge of the film between the sprocket holes and the edge of the picture. In order to utilize the space provided for the sound track a means and method had to be evolved for photographing the sound on the film. For this, a recording channel consisting of a microphone, electrical amplifiers and volume controls and a means of varying the light which exposes the sound track on the film was provided. This electrical recording channel is the tool of the sound man and is purely a robot that must be guided and directed by the sound man.

Sound is transmitted to the brain through the ear, and the ear is only a part of our sense of hearing. We hear sound with our two ears and this is called binaural hearing, or hearing from two sources. Since we collect sound from both ears, or through two sources, the sound that each ear hears is being picked up and collected from different reflecting surfaces in the room. If we place one ear close to a source of sound, most of the sound picked up by one ear is direct sound, while that picked up by the other is reflected sound. By means of this binaural sound pick-up through two ears we are able to distinguish and locate the source from which the sound is coming. In addition, we all, unconsciously, due to our binaural sense of hearing, are able to concentrate on the sounds we want to hear and disregard the unwanted sounds. In this way we are able to pick out the voice of just one person talking in a group of people.

The sound channel with its microphone is strictly a monaural pick-up of sound. That

means it picks up from one source, and cannot discriminate between wanted and unwanted sounds. It picks up equally well all the sounds entering the microphone regardless of whether they are required.

There is a certain similarity between sound pick-up for radio and sound pick-up for pictures, but this similarity ends with



Reeve O. Strock addresses the National Board

the sound pick-up itself. In radio sound pick-up the sound man has nothing to worry about except the pick-up of sound with a view of what is to come out of your radio loudspeaker. He has no picture or frame line to contend with; no lights, or microphone shadows due to lights, to bother him. For soft sounds he can put the microphone close to the source of sound. In picture work the microphone must never appear in the picture. It must be placed somewhere outside the picture line. Radio pick-up is tailored to an entirely different listening viewpoint than motion picture sound pick-up. Most of you listen on your radios at a relatively low volume and usually with the set tuned to "mellow." All of this is taken into consideration for radio pick-up. In radio

sound pick-up the illusion is created entirely by sound. In motion picture sound pick-up the sound is tailored to theatre reproduction. The sound must come from its apparent source in the picture on the screen. It must be in perspective to the size of the objects in the picture. In other words, it must have "long shot" and "close up" pick-up and must sound natural. Motion picture sound is largely a question of loudness and perspective. In normal hearing we obtain perspective by use of our binaural hearing with the two ears. Since a microphone and recording channel are monaural apparatus perspective must be obtained in other ways.

Motion picture sound offers problems different from those of the legitimate stage. The people in the picture are usually shown larger than a living actor on a stage. In addition, there is a certain psychology that makes it unconsciously unnecessary for us to hear every single word as spoken in a stage play, but in motion picture work it is definitely important and required that everything spoken be heard, and in proper relation with respect to loudness and perspective. In stage work the actors speak according to the mood of the scene. The sound man must take all of this into consideration and guide his robot accordingly. The sound man on the recording stage working with the motion picture director is the brains of the recording channel, and it is up to him to provide the sound illusion that the director and cameraman are putting into the scene as shown on the screen.

Probably the easiest thing that the sound man does is record direct sounds. His training has been essentially from the engineering standpoint and he speaks an odd language of decibels, gammas, amplifier gain and other terms which are usually not too familiar to the motion picture production people. In order for the sound man to guide his recording channel properly he must be familiar with all the other factors that go to make up the finished product of the motion picture. Being an engineer he is better able to understand the problems of the various other departments.

The making of good sound requires the cooperation of all the various departments concerned with the making of the picture. The set designer must design his sets with

acoustics in mind. The cameraman and the director must establish their camera angles and geography of the picture with sound in mind. The making of sound for the motion picture is only a part of the entire job. It cannot rest on any past laurels, but must be constantly improved along with the quality of the picture, to provide new means and methods for the director's and production men's ideas.

Now a bit about the mechanics of sound recording. The studio recording of sound is made on a different piece of film from the picture. In the theatres both the sound and picture appear on one film printed side by side. This combining of the sound and picture does not occur until the final printing of the film for theatre use. It is kept entirely separate during the recording, editing and re-recording process. In the making of a motion picture the action is always shot in relatively short sequences. It is rarely, if ever, done in the sequence of the story. Very often the last of the story is photographed and recorded at the beginning of shooting, perhaps because of stage space necessities or because large sets are required in other parts of the shooting schedule. All of the sounds appearing in any one scene are rarely recorded at the time of recording the dialog. In the scene of a dance hall crowded with people and perhaps full of commotion, with dialog at one location in the scene, the dialog is recorded with perhaps some undercurrent of crowd noise, but any other sounds which go to make up this scene are recorded separately on different pieces of film.

When you hear music under a love scene, this music has always been recorded separately. When you see a singer singing a song on the screen, invariably this sound has been recorded separately. The recorded sound is then reproduced on the photographing stage while the singer moves his lips in synchronization with the sound he hears while he is being photographed. This is necessary to facilitate the obtaining of good sound while photographing different camera angles, such as close ups, medium and long shots, which would be almost impossible if the sound were recorded at the time of photographing.

After all the photographing has been

finished and all of the sound has been recorded, the picture and sound is turned over to the editing department and cut into sequences. When this has been done and the picture is ready to be printed in its final form, all of the sound, such as music, dialog and sound effects, is then put through what is known as the Re-recording process. The Re-recording process applies only to sound and consists of mixing together all of the sounds pertaining to any one scene in their proper relation as to loudness, perspective and tone quality. We may have as many as six or more separate sound tracks, each one having different types of sound. One track will be dialog, one will be music, one will be crowd noises, one will have traffic noises, others fire engines, etc. Each of these various sound films is put on a separate reproducer which is very much like the projection machine in the theatre except that it does not show the picture. The sound output from each of these reproducing machines is fed through a separate volume control, and the sounds from each of the films are mixed together in their proper relation, while the net result is electrically recorded on a single track of film which is known as the Master Sound negative. The original picture sequences have been patched together in proper sequence and continuity to make up the Master Picture negative. The Master Picture negative and Master Sound negative are then printed on the single strip of positive film which you see and hear in the theatre. Obviously many prints can be made from these two master negatives.

The job of making motion picture sound is not finished until the projectionist in the theatre gets to work. Obviously if the theatre volume is much too high or too low, the effect is un-natural and sometimes grotesque. The projectionist can only do his job well if he has the full cooperation of the theatre manager. The loudness of theatre projection must be different for a full house than for a relatively empty one, because of the additional acoustic absorbing properties of a large audience. For good motion picture sound it is necessary to have the cooperation of all parties concerned; the director, the cameraman, all the departments concerned with the making of the picture and, in addi-

tion, the theatre projectionists and managers.

Good sound is natural sound tempered by the perspective and size of the objects in the picture. Sound is but one portion of a motion picture and we are all constantly working to provide and to improve the means for better motion picture entertainment.

Music in the Motion Picture

(Continued from page 6)

a job now which I think is a great milestone in the realm of music in pictures. He is going to make a picture with Mr. Walt Disney. I imagine that most of you know about it. It is to be to the music of "Til Eulenspiegel" by Richard Strauss. I think this is the first time in the history of motion pictures that a really great classical work of music is being developed into a movie.

Knowing the literature as I do, I can tell you that there are thousands and thousands of pieces of music, good music, that can be similarly treated. Whether the opera will ever come to the screen I do not know. I doubt it. I do not think that the people who have good voices usually photograph very well.

But I do know that the "Pastorale Symphony" of Beethoven could be pictured very beautifully. There are other works of Strauss that could be taken and developed into great motion pictures. I will be very happy when the day comes to serve in that type of work.

In the meantime we go on and we serve a purpose in the making of motion pictures very much like the makeup man, the art director, the carpenter. We work daily from nine or nine-thirty in the morning until five or five-thirty at night, sometimes later, and sometimes we have to work at night. When the picture is finished, it goes out, and we are the only ones who know how hard we have worked in that picture.

But, as I told you before, I am interested in the movies and in music and I very fervently and ardently hope that the day will come when I may serve in the making of a picture which is predicated on the work of some great musical genius.

Notes From Abroad

(From a Travelling Correspondent)

England

ENGLAND is blessed with few of the natural advantages of the United States—at least from the movie-maker's point of view. There is no state of eternal sunshine in any section of its length and breadth, no monthly guarantees of good weather to help with exterior scenes. When the Mayflower Company made *The Beachcomber* they had to move their headquarters to the South of France, where palms and coral reefs were free from greyness and rain. But when the same company turned to the making of *Jamaica Inn* they found the home climate a perfect setting for this tale of grey cliffs, stormy waters and cloudy nights.

Towards the end of February the picture was practically completed. There remained only the shooting of the first sequence in the script—where the Cornish pirates douse the beacons on the coast of Cornwall and pillage the ships that are swept into the rocky bays.

The Elstree cafeteria was filled with pirates. No ordinary extras these, but a collection of toughs of the first water, prepared to spend a whole night plunging into an icy "sea" and breaking one another's heads. A student of prize-fights would recognize many of them, despite Miss Molly McArthur's impressive costumes; there is King Curtis, British heavy-weight wrestling champion of 1932; Sid Turner, once an Army champion, and ex-boxing instructor at Columbia University Club before he helped train Tommy Farr. There's "Sir Anthony" Arpino, whose very Oxford accent didn't stop him going 15 rounds with Farr, and many other all-in wrestlers, ex-seamen, soldiers and hard-faced wanderers from New Zealand and Australia. As they move out of the warm cafeteria onto the huge outdoor set, an enthusiastic unit manager begins a glowing description of the vast quantities of steaks, sandwiches, noggins of rum, buns, hot tea, etc. consumed by these human gorillas. . . .

"Of course" he says "this is one of the most elaborate sequences of the film. We've had to build a concrete tank 6,000 square feet in size to accomodate an exact reproduction of a 3-masted West-Indies packet boat. When the boat's wrecked, 45,000 gallons of water are shot down fifteen 60 foot chutes, and we've got a few airplane engines in the background to set up a good stiff breeze . . . The pirates? Oh, that's most interesting. Every mother's son of them has to have a doctor's certificate stating he's capable of dashing into so much water in the middle of a February night, and he signs a document freeing the company of any responsibility for the consequences. We pay each pirate five guineas a day and see he's coated with tallow and dosed with rum before he takes the plunge. We've got two doctors standing by, as well as a team of St. John's Ambulance men and nurses. There's a hot house with dry clothes awaiting each pirate. In short, we're doing everything to make them as comfortable as possible. . . ."

This last comment is open to question. The night sky is black with clouds and hundreds of people are picking their way gingerly on duckboards through pools of ice-cold water. (If its warmed in any way it gives off steam, which is not considered correct). The more famous pirates are striking postures in the water and having the hair on their chests photographed for fan magazines. A noted British thriller-writer, immaculately turned out in a beaver collar and suede shoes, passes absently under one of the giant tanks at the moment it decides to overflow. He is listed as casualty No. I. Harry Stradling, American cameraman, has set up his equipment on the huge grey "cliffs" surrounding the set, and beams of light from his electric batteries weave across the desolation. A minimum of comfort is provided by three coke braziers, thickly surrounded by a jam of shivering humanity: script-girls, bit-players, prop-men, mechanics, visitors. Most of them have adopted pirate costumes as the only means of protection, and Erich Pommer



The Heavenly Twins: Charles Laughton and Alfred Hitchcock in the Elstree Studio Cafeteria

makes a strange bandit as he wanders through the slush in immense Wellington boots, talking to Alfred Hitchcock. Robert Newton, the suave, immaculate Controlleur in *The Beachcomber*, looks more like an escaped lunatic in his new part, with long, tangled hair and beard. At the moment he does a good job of holding off death from exposure by keeping up a running flow of dry wisecracks and mimicry. A lot of the men have asked their wives to come and see the spectacle . . . poor things, in their open-toed shoes and smart little city coats. Pommer is very sympathetic . . . and soon the wardrobe manager appears and turns the shivering little women into warm pirates.

After four hours steady pumping the last of the 45,000 gallons of water arrives in the tanks, and a master-mind, known simply as "George," shouts final instructions to the workmen perched in the cliff-sides and on top of the chutes. . . . "All you what's up there don't forget to test yer tanks and make sure nobody's got under 'em and keep outer

the way. . . . Shine yer torches when yer tanks is ready and don't get messin' round where things is comin' . . ." etc. Hitchcock—looking strangely out of place as the director when one thinks of the simplicity and neatness that has always distinguished his previous pictures—takes the microphone from George and retreats into a little hut with it to shout his last orders. First he makes everyone good-humored by drily asking "Harry" to be good enough to inform him when he has finished painting his favorite rock. Then he turns to a switchboard beside him and begins to press its various buttons for a check on whether all parties can see the colored lights. . . "yellow for all clear . . . green for starting shooting . . . blue for cut." The affirmative shouts come echoing back from the darkness; the pirates leave their warm braziers and take their positions on a ramp ready to rush into the water. Hitchcock waves his hand, and with an ear-splitting crash the 'plane engines burst into action, filling the ship's torn sails with a

deluge of wind and flattening a few careless little girls. Everyone is waiting for the yellow light to flash the all-clear signal, when a sudden commotion and squabbling starts everyone peering and questioning. It turns out to be the pirates—on strike for the fourth time for a raise. No one seems to blame them in the least; a parley is held and the result announced by a burst of cheering and singing from the pirates who stride back to their ramp. The ambulance men move back to the edge of the set, ready to jump forward as soon as the cameras and waves have done their worst. Hitchcock goes back to his switchboard, takes a final glance round and . . . Flash! from the yellow light . . . Flash! from the green light . . . and tons of water comes foaming down the chutes (its been mixed with a rheumatism remedy that wont comfort the pirates but is just grand for making foam) and the pirates dash madly down the ramp and plunge into the deluge. For thirty-two seconds they battle through the water and swarm up the ship's sides, stabbing and cudgelling its crew, while the boat rocks and sways in the gale from the 'plane propellers and stands out brilliantly in the glare of Harry Stradling's lights. Just when one has begun to feel that the awful din can be endured no longer, the blue signal flashes, and the propellers sputter into silence as cameras stop rolling and the last trickle of water slides against the ship's sides. One pirate has been washed over fifteen feet of sand and rocks; the ambulance men dash forward, heave him to his feet and revive him. His mates stagger off into the darkness to the welcome hot-house, dry clothes and rum. Everyone else is beginning to chatter excitedly and applaud. But Erich Pommer only purses his lips and shakes his head rather coldly. "Not enough water . . ." he says.

The pumps are set going again. It is now past midnight, but shooting is slated to go on until seven in the morning. The visitors, however, have had enough. Bedraggled and chilled to the bone and with a shiver of sympathy for the pirates—now back in the cafeteria being fattened for the next slaughter—they climb gratefully into the big company cars and sweep off down the road to London—and warm beds.

Paris

TWO new films were making their first appearances in Paris last month. More than two, actually, but the visitor with limited time is bound to go straight to his favorite directors and stars and ignore the rest. A new Renoir and a new Duvivier, featuring Jean Gabin and Louis Jouvet respectively, were the first to take my attention.

Duvivier's *La Fin du Jour* was packing them in on its opening night. Whether it will continue to do so is doubtful, since there is nothing about this film to place it anywhere near top-ranking. In his previous films, particularly *La Maternelle*, *Poil de Carotte* and *Merlusse*, Duvivier has revealed his leaning towards exploiting the weaker human emotions, and the main charge brought against him by his critics and friends is sentimentality. As a rule, however, he gets by through his real ability to tell a story as simply and directly as possible, shining especially in his choice of intimate personal scenes which tell far more than appears on the surface.

In *La Fin du Jour* his sentimentality is at its worst and his story-telling confused and laborious. His setting is a charity home for aged actors to which a one-time matinee idol (Louis Jouvet) is forced to retire. The home is full of his one-time female adorers, and with plenty of disdain and false pride the old actor sets out to convince them that he is still the darling of numerous young girls in the outside world. Perfumed letters pour in by every mail and win him the awe of the old ladies who believed him *passé* and forgotten. All goes well until he is discoverer faking the letters, and receives the derision and laughter of the whole home. His attempt to stage a come-back by persuading a young servant girl (Madeleine Ozeray) to commit suicide for love of him, is foiled, and the half-crazed hero is moved to the nearest lunatic asylum.

This, alone, would be enough to tax the abilities of any director in attempting to make it ring true. But when there are added various other complications in the lives of other inmates of the home, less extreme but equally close to bathos, the story collapses

into a muddle of sentimental foolishness, rarely moving with any firmness and direction and scarcely ever relieved by fine handling of individual sequences. Even Jouvett is uninteresting in his part, and there are no small fry in the cast capable of giving the picture any kind of a lift.

Renoir's *La Bête Humaine* is quite another story. Here, too, the forces of jealousy, pride and suspicion are forever coming to the surface, but always with the telling plainness that a well told story must always bring out. Renoir's film is taken from one of Zola's stories, and his hero (Jean Gabin) is a simple engineer—the antithesis of Duvivier's posing matinee idol. But the engineer is paying for the sins of his drunken fathers with splitting headaches and blind moments when he becomes murderous, and against the background of giant expresses, engine sheds and the homes of railroad workers, he becomes involved in a tangle of marital jealousies and quarrels which lead to his committing murder and, finally, suicide.

Renoir has sought to weave together the lives of men with the lives of the machines they control, and while he does not wholly succeed in this, there is still the fascination of a background which deals with the mechanism of a man's work. His handling of his human beings is admirably done and, as is his wont, he leaves his theme open to every individual's interpretation. Gabin plays his part with all the excellence we have come to expect from him, and Simone Simon is well-cast and very successful as the selfish, flighty wife of a station-master, mainly responsible for the breaking out of "the human beast" in those around her. While this film has not the stature of *The Lower Depths* and *Grand Illusion* it stands well above the average level and has many really distinguished moments.

One film that was making its last rounds of the smaller Paris movie-houses was *The Puritan*. Based on the novel of the same name by one of Ireland's finest living writers, *The Puritan* is probably one of the best films ever to come out of France. Be that as it may, it appears doomed never to come into the state of New York, having been classed by the State Board of Censors as "indecent,"

"immoral," "inhuman," "salacious," "lewd," and various other categories that have slipped my mind for the moment.

Briefly, the story of *The Puritan* is based upon the actions of a fanatical moralist, whose hatred for all things impure inevitably leads him to violent acts of revenge against those responsible for impurity. Eventually he is dragged down to his death by the very elements he has reviled and ruthlessly condemned in his fellow men.

This study of the censorial mind is hardly likely to be appreciated by any censor. Any psychological study which goes so deeply and penetratingly into the workings of a human mind is bound to turn up things that puritans the world over will prefer to pretend do not exist. But this is one thing—to describe the film in the adjectives quoted above is quite another.

It is in the use of such words, however, that much of the strength of the censor lies. By describing a film as "lewd," "salacious" etc. he plays upon one of the strongest fears present in any community—the fear of being thought unrespectable by the neighbors. Few individuals have the independence, or even the opportunity, to find out for themselves just what a censor is talking about when he condemns a film in terms such as these. And even if people are prepared to find out, the fear of their neighbor's condemnation frequently keeps them from changing their minds.

What most people forget, however, and what the censor makes no attempt at all to remember, is the audience for which such a film as *The Puritan* has been made. If *The Puritan* were shown in New York it would run at one of the smaller theatres catering to a limited audience who don't mind English sub-titles and are, in general, well aware of what they are going to see. For a long time now it has been popular to describe such theatres as "the arties"—a rather condescending way of describing movie-houses whose appeal is a limited one. Yet, when it comes to the exhibition of a film in which precisely such a limited audience is interested, the censor judges it solely by the standard applied to the general run of theatres. When we add to that that the film contains some of the finest direction ever seen on the

(Continued on page 20)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Wuthering Heights

Adapted by Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht from Emily Brontë's novel, directed by William Wyler, photographed by Gregg Toland, musical score by Alfred Newman. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn, released by United Artists.

The Cast

Heathcliff Laurence Olivier
Catherine Merle Oberon
Edgar Linton David Niven
Isabella Linton Geraldine Fitzgerald
Ellen Dean Flora Robson
Hindley Hugh Williams
Dr. Kenneth Donald Crisp
Joseph Leo G. Carroll
Judge Linton Cecil Humphreys
Lockwood Miles Mander
Robert Romaine Callender
Heathcliff (as a child) Rex Downing
Cathy (as a child) Sarita Wooden
Hindley (as a child) Douglas Scott

PEOPLE to whom Emily Brontë's only novel seems uniquely great might naturally have shuddered when the news came that *Wuthering Heights* was to be made into a movie. Many of them did. Then came the further news that Samuel Goldwyn was to do it, and the wise ones knew they might as well control their shudders till they actually saw it. You never can tell about Mr. Goldwyn—he has done some pretty fine things. The waiting is over now, the shudders unjustified. The picture is the best that Mr. Goldwyn has ever made. Moreover, it isn't a picture that only the serious art-lovers will rave about and the rest of the public stay away from—it has dramatic grip and emotional power to catch and hold any intelligence that looks to the screen for something besides laughter.

There's no point in comparing the film too closely with the novel: it's an extremely difficult novel to dramatize, covering two

generations in time, with practically two sets of characters and a piling up of violent passions and incidents that no play or movie could hope to include. The one important and supremely desirable thing is that the character of one man be made understandable in its atmospheric and emotional setting. That is the heart of the book, and it has been made to live again in the movie with surprising power. Nobody can deny the cleverness and movie knowingness of Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht, but they usually content themselves with doing a quick and easy job, with tongue in cheek and plenty of solicitude for the lowest in public taste. Here, with intelligent respect for their material, they have done their very good best, and wrought a script that has integrity and superb dramatic effectiveness.

Wuthering Heights was a house on the Yorkshire moors, where two children, a brother and sister, lived with their father. A pleasant house in spite of its austere natural surroundings, to which the father brought a dark and gypsyish orphan boy named Heathcliff, to make one of the family. But even as children the three were strangely bound together by love and hate: between Heathcliff and the girl Cathy grew an almost mystical sympathy and oneness of feeling, as if they were two strings of an instrument which vibrated equally to any tenderness or wild violence that touched them, while the brother Hindley from the beginning hated the strange boy intruded into the household with a bitterness that became an obsession. Then the father died and Hindley became master, with full power to work his hatred upon Heathcliff, brutalizing him into the lowest of stable servants. But instead of

running away, for love of Cathy Heathcliff stayed, and so the three grew up.

The torturing ties of love and hate grew with them, to become dark and terrifying passions when Heathcliff and Hindley were men and Cathy a woman. Only death could still them, only in death could peace come to those stormy souls. There the film ends, after Heathcliff has finally fled from his torture and Cathy turned to the mind calm of an affectionate marriage with a neighbor's son, and Heathcliff returns, rich and vengeful, to take a bitter and ultimately unsatisfying payment from those who made his boyhood and youth so miserable. It is a tragedy of the degrading and brutalizing of a strong man's personality, and of the fatal workings of hate usurping the place of love. An enormously difficult tragedy to portray, whether in words or in pictures, but this film does it, with beauty and power and amazing clarity. Why Heathcliff was what he was, tortured, torturing himself and others—why Cathy held fast to him though a part of her wanted to escape from him and never could—probably only an Emily Brontë could ever make that plain. But Emily Brontë is allowed to speak for herself on the screen, through writing and directing and acting and all the instruments of movie making that makes no condescensions to unintelligence but by reaching up to the level of their material achieve a height that few pictures of this kind attain.

It is necessary to say of William Wyler's direction only that it is superbly equal to its opportunities. And so is the acting. Naturally Laurence Olivier dominates everything. He has a chance to, and is able to. His Heathcliff is one of the screen performances that has to be called great. Rex Downing, who acts Heathcliff as a child, sets the key for Heathcliff as a man (as Sarita Wooden does for Cathy), and Olivier takes up the role as youth and plays it on into embittered manhood with increasing power to a magnificent climax. Merle Oberon manages Cathy almost beyond her natural capacity—she just isn't genius enough to put Cathy on a level with Heathcliff. But what actress is? Geraldine Fitzgerald strikes the topmost note among the women, with a heart-breaking moment of which even the memory is

poignant. The others fit in beautifully, in their necessary but subordinate places.

The picture isn't without minor, if negligible, faults. The musical score is particularly unfortunate, syrupy and banal and completely missing the feeling it should heighten. The very ending, of ghosts moving hand-in-hand through the snow up to the crag that represented the only moments of happiness in their mortal lives, is trite and unimaginative. Some such ending is necessary—Emily Brontë herself had it—but it should have been much better. Inspiration faltered at the final moment.

Probably Samuel Goldwyn is ultimately responsible for the quality of this picture. He takes too lively an interest in his productions simply to have allowed this to be good of itself, without having a positive hand in it, and the praise that will come to him from it ought to make him not only proud but eager to stay on the high level he has here reached.

Rated Exceptional.

J. S. H.

Love Affair

Screenplay by Delmer Daves and Donald Ogden Stewart from a story by Mildred Cram and Leo McCarey, produced and directed by Leo McCarey, photographed by Rudolph Mate, settings by Van Nest Polglase, musical score by Roy Webb. Released by RKO-Radio.

The Cast

<i>Terry</i>	<i>Irene Dunne</i>
<i>Michel</i>	<i>Charles Boyer</i>
<i>Grandmother</i>	<i>Maria Ouspenskaya</i>
<i>Kenneth Bradley</i>	<i>Lee Bowman</i>
<i>Lois Clarke</i>	<i>Astrid Allwyn</i>
<i>Maurice Coubert</i>	<i>Maurice Moscovitch</i>

NOTHING could be simpler, or even more machine-made and threadbare, than the plot of *Love Affair*. A smooth, gentlemanly heart-breaker and a beautiful, apparently sophisticated woman meet and flirt on a transatlantic liner; they fall in love, but being fairly experienced in such matters they decide to see how long it lasts before venturing into matrimony; it does last for the appointed time, but on her way to tell him so, the woman meets with an accident that makes a cripple of her, and rather than become a burden to him she lets him believe that she has forgotten him; but

he eventually finds her, sees through her self-sacrificial pose, and all is well.

But a plot by the time it reaches the screen can be quite a bit more than he plus she plus the things that make them they, and Leo McCarey enters largely and predominantly into the sum-total of *Love Affair*. He must have had good help from the men who wrote the dialogue, but as part author, as well as producer and director, he must himself have been chiefly responsible for as fine a piece of movie-making as any made-for-the-customers thing of this sort is likely to be in this or any other year.

From the delightful beginning—three radio gossips of different nationalities hitting off their respective selves and publics in a broadcast proclamation that a renowned society-page Lothario is leaving Europe for America to join his bride-to-be—you are comfortably aware that a note of comedy has been struck and is likely to be sustained. And you are not let down. Personalities are the medium that carry the comedy, enough trimmed out with character to make familiar actors seem a little more than just themselves. Sentiment comes into it, a light dusting of sugar to keep the comedy from being too tart, and occasionally a sweet sort of sadness—just the sort of combination that makes dabbing away a tear while munching a chocolate such an agreeable thing. And it all flows along with a pleasant, unobtrusive expertness, and in the end you feel that some fiction people have stepped out of their story-book world and been with you as actual human beings for an hour. Then you will probably forget all about them except that you were pleased, as they say, to meet them.

Many more people than are named in the cast keep the background of this love story animated and life-like. They help create the illusion that this oft-told affair of boy meeting girl is not so cut-and-dried a formula after all, but something with the perennial possibility of freshness in it. That, perhaps, is one of Mr. McCarey's greatest virtues as a director—his craftily inconspicuous way of laying a groundwork of plausibility upon which anything he chooses to erect escapes banality and achieves the kind of credibility he is aiming at.

J. S. H.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Alexander Nevsky

Written by Sergei Eisenstein and Peter A. Pavlenko, directed by Sergei Eisenstein and D. I. Vassiliev, photographed by Edward Tisse, musical score by Sergei Prokofiev. Produced by Mosfilm, U.S.S.R., distributed by Amkino.

The Cast

Prince Alexander Yaroslavich Nevsky

Nikolai Cherkassov

Vassily Buslai N. P. Okhlopkov

Gavrilo Olexich A. L. Abrikossov

Ignat, Master Armorer D. N. Orlov

Pavsha, Governor of Pskov V. K. Novikov

Domash, nobleman of Novgorod N. N. Arski

Amelfa Timofeyevna, mother of Buslai

V. O. Massalitinova

Olga, a Novgorod girl V. S. Ivashova

Vassilissa A. S. Danilova

Master of the Teutonic Order V. L. Ershov

Tverdillo, traitorous mayor of Pskov

S. K. Blinnikov

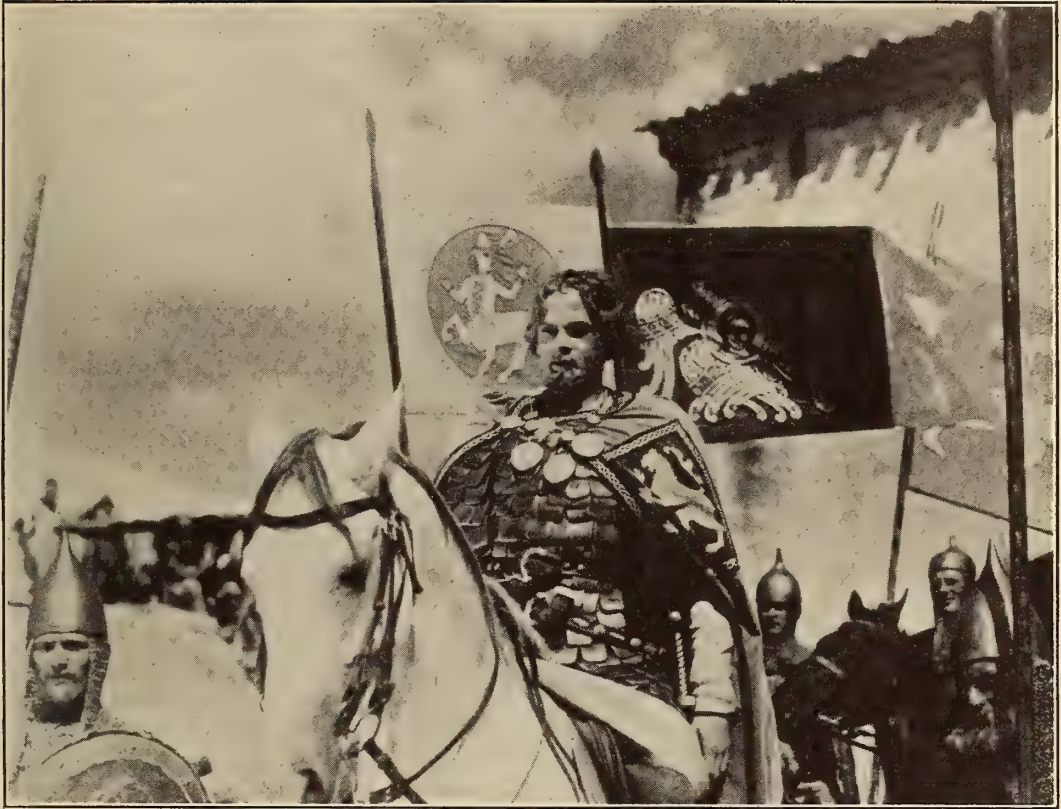
Anani, a monk I. I. Lagutin

The Bishop L. A. Fenin

The Black-robed Monk N. A. Rogozhin

EISENSTEIN, maker of *Potemkin* and *Ten Days that Shook the World* in the great days of the Russian silent film, has gone into Russia's past for the first of his talking films to reach us. Instead of celebrating the Russian revolution he is picturing a time in the thirteenth century when the Russians faced and defied encirclement. Out of ancient battles and knights in armor he has screened a vivid and picturesque parallel to the present, with emotional overtones that chime eloquently and ominously with the feelings of today. It isn't hard to see why Eisenstein received the Order of Lenin for making the film: he has hit upon an enemy most of the civilized world can unite in hating, and without having to utter a syllable in defence of Marxian Socialism.

The picture goes back to the twelve hundreds, when the Tartars from the East had enslaved practically all of Russia and a new foe, more modern and more sinister, suddenly threatened from the West: the Order of Teutonic Knights. Powerfully beset from without, and with home traitors working against them from within, the people turned to a hero who, though still young, had retired from war and taken up the peaceful fisherman's trade: Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, whose victory over the Swedes on the Neva River had given him the honorary surname of Nevsky. Under his leadership they gloriously defeated the invading Ger-



Nikolai Cherkassov as Prince Nevsky

mans, driving them out on the frozen Lake Peipus, where the ice broke under the weight of their heavy armor and drowned them. Like so many Russian films, this one sums up its message with a ringing speech: "Go home and tell all in foreign lands that Russia lives. Let them come to us as guests. . . . But if anyone comes to us with the sword, he shall perish by the sword. On this the Russian land stands and will stand."

The picture is in the "grand" tradition, its most memorable parts done with Eisenstein's masterly flair for crowds and mass movement and Edward Tisse's camera genius for horizon figures against a sweeping sky. Individuals are hardly more than symbols: the princely leader, tall and calm and heroic; fair-haired, boy-faced soldiers; home traitors, looking like the very actors who would be playing villainous kulaks in a post-Lenin drama; the pretty girl who puts on armor and who, since she is obviously no good as a soldier, can only be a prediction of the time when women work shoulder to shoulder with

men; the monk and bishop of the invading Teutons, whose attitudes and expressions hint none too subtly at the sinister part the clergy play in the subjection of the people; two fighters and an armorer who, having no point as persons, must represent something in the way of pre-classless classes. All of these, with no individual character, are merely broad-stroked masks in what is essentially a pageant, a vast movement of masses in a vast land, almost mystical in scope, in which smaller things are either intrusive or only figuratively significant. Their significance, being so largely figurative, is even more largely an intrusion: they caper grotesquely in the foreground, diverting attention from larger and more impressive things. This is particularly true of a naive and inept attempt at romance, a rivalry between two professional soldiers, about as convincing as figures in a Latin comedy, for a stuffed-girl who promises to wed the one who is most valiant in battle. Eisenstein should avoid love stories and comics.

Yet these things, and a lot of slipshod detail, are easily forgotten: one inclines readily enough to a belief that Eisenstein just didn't bother about such minor matters because he had something larger in mind. And the larger things do stick in the memory. The wide land and its wider skies, the clash and surge of fighting men, make pictures not easy to forget, much more indelible than what the usual he or she thinks and feels.

Most consistently impressive of all is the musical score that Sergei Prokofiev wrote for the film, always in its place as an accompaniment, never shoving forward as a show in itself, vitalizing and emotionalizing the pictures on the screen. J. S. H.

Rated Honorable Mention

"Murder in Massachusetts"

THE honorable name of Massachusetts appears nowhere in the film that has somehow got called *Let Us Live*, and with that omission goes one of the chief points that make the film different from countless other movies in which an innocent man has been convicted of murder on circumstantial evidence and saved from execution at the last, last moment. It happens to have been founded on, and to follow in many of its essential details, an actual case, and knowing that there is more truth than fiction in it helps enormously to freshen up a plot that would otherwise seem little more than stale melodrama—if one is thinking only of plot.

But there are two other things that lift it out of the plot rut and make it different, an unusual emphasis and unusual direction. Stories of this kind invariably reach an eventual happy ending and pretend that since an innocent life has been saved all is supremely well. In this case, though the life is saved, the ending is tragic, because a decent, honest man's faith in the security that his decency and honesty should provide for him has been completely shattered. Flaws, not so much in the administration of law and justice as in the human agents of that administration, overworked, bound up in their own special jobs, harried by rush and weariness, combine with the unintel-

ligence of well-meaning but ordinary persons called upon to perform unaccustomed duties, to wreck a man's faith in his fellow-man. That is a tragedy that has not been put on the screen in this form before.

And John Brahm, who with every new picture he makes reveals new capacities as a director, has done this one for all there is in it. For his craftsmanship, quite apart from whatever social implications it contains, this film is worth every serious movie-lover's attention. J. S. H.

Notes from Abroad

(Continued from page 15)

screen, as well as incomparable acting by Jean-Louis Barrault in the title role, it becomes apparent how thoroughly arbitrary and unjustified the action of the censors has been. The problem of dictatorial blue-pencilling of films is acute enough in the field of American films made for general consumption; now we are seeing that same dictatorship being carried into a field that has scarcely no connection at all with the general audience.

The Neely Bill

(Continued from page 3)

dom of the screen, for all these are maintained through the voluntary self-discipline that seeks to distinguish between freedom and license. The philosophy that an act of Congress is necessary to instill decency and a sense of public service in American industry belongs to the enemies, not to the friends, of democracy.

"What is even more astounding is that such a policy should be urged at a time when the most carping have ceased to criticize pictures on moral grounds, when constructive criticism is united on the need of a more interesting, informative and vital entertainment screen, and when the demand is for the greatest possible freedom of opportunity to pioneer with new themes and treatments in motion picture entertainment."

Continuing on to take up the written synopsis proviso of the Bill, Dr. Potter stated: "Contrary to encouraging a better screen, even a casual reading of Senator Neely's Bill indicates that its effect is more likely to be bad than good.

"For instance, take Section 4 of the measure before you which provides that a written synopsis of each film shall be made part of the lease, and shall include . . . here I quote verbatim from this section:

- '(a) an outline of the story, incidents and scenes depicted or to be depicted, and
- (b) a statement describing the manner of treatment of dialogs concerning any scenes depicting vice, crime or suggestion of sexual passion.'

Dr. Potter then discussed this proviso in its relation to the realities of motion picture production, and pointed out the fact that according to its rules a producer could be seriously penalized for straying away from his original synopsis, even when he was doing so for perfectly moral and authentic reasons which he felt would result in a cleaner, healthier script. He concluded—"Even if such a synopsis were furnished after the picture had been completed, it is unlikely that any two minds could agree on a statement . . . 'describing the manner of treatment of dialogs concerning any scenes depicting vice, crime or suggestion of sexual passion.' Its super-absurdity should be evident from the fact that even trained reviewers of the theatre, after seeing a performance, will rarely agree on matters of suggestiveness, crime or morals, really or allegedly projected from the stage.

"It is for the reasons stated and the facts submitted that the National Board of Review desires to register itself as firmly as possible against the passage of Senator Neely's Bill."

THE attention of New York readers is called to a bill introduced by Assemblyman Crews before the Assembly of that State, Bill No. 1915, requiring that only licensed operators can operate any motion picture projection machine. This affects the showing of 16 mm non-inflammable films in homes, schools, churches, and therefore the bill is being protested by those interested in any educational use of the motion pictures.

A Note About the Conference Activities Panel

WE are continuing to present in the Magazine the talks given at the annual Conference of the National Board of Review on the subject "The Making of a Motion Picture," in answer to the request of those who were present at the Conference, and others to have this material in permanent form for reference and study. The Conference panel session on community motion picture activities presented delegates from more than twenty representative communities telling of their work in Motion Picture Councils and other film activity groups. It was at first planned to run these reports in different issues of the Magazine, since the size of the Magazine prevents publishing them in one issue, but as they furnish from the various experiences the why and how to many questions on this community interest, it seems that they would be of more service in one unit, and they will therefore be published in the form of a pamphlet supplement to the next issue of the Magazine.

Publications Reviewed

Educational Production of Motion Pictures

IF you want to turn to one volume for information on the film producing activities of universities and schools, that is now possible, for the Proceedings of a Conference on the Educational Production of Motion Pictures, held last November at Ohio State University, have been compiled into a sizable mimeographed volume of 120 pages. The Conference was sponsored jointly by the College of Education and the Department of Photography of Ohio State University; The National Council of Teachers of English and the Film Project of the American Council on Education. And thus many authorities on the subject of the motion picture, as it is made and used in connection with university and school work, took part in the program.

There are sixteen talks included, some of

the subjects are "Community Group Activities" by Miss Eleanor D. Child, Greenwich High School, Greenwich, Conn.; "Critical Problems in the Production, Use, and Distribution of School and College Films" by Edgar Dale, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University; "Sound Accompaniment for Silent Films" by Donald A. Eldridge, Director Department of Visual Instruction, Board of Education, New Haven, Conn.; "The Status and Future of Educationally Produced Films" by Hardy R. Finch, National Council of Teachers of English; "School-Made Films for General Education" by Charles F. Hoban, Jr., Director, Film Project, American Council on Education. We suggest to those interested in the educational film this volume as a text of helpful reading. It can be secured from the Publications Office of Ohio State University, Columbus, O., price \$1.25.

Cinema and the Young

THE League of Nations Advisory Committee on Social Questions has issued in its series of publications a pamphlet on "The Recreational Cinema and the Young." It will answer the questions often asked, by those in community motion picture groups working with children, concerning what other countries are learning and doing about the motion picture attendance of young people. Here you will read what is done in providing special children's programs in the United Kingdom, in France, Bulgaria, in Japan and elsewhere. It seems to indicate children's preferences are much the same the world over. The League of Nations publications in America can be secured from Columbia University Press, International Documents Service, 2960 Broadway, New York City.

"VISUAL Aids to Education," a catalog of educational 16mm motion picture films, offered for loan by the University of California Extension Division, Department of Visual Instruction, lists so many educational films in both sound and silent that it is of interest, even if one is not a borrower, as an indication, from its subject index, of how many films there are in various classifications.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

- f MIDNIGHT — Claudette Colbert, Don Ameche. Based on story by Charles Brackett and Billy Schulz. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. An excellent comedy. The adventures of an attractive American girl in Paris. Penniless she finds herself involved in the pursuit of a wealthy husband, but fate in the garb of a taxi driver saves her from herself. The entire case is splendid. Paramount.
-
- f *MIKADO, THE — Kenny Baker, Martyn Green. From the opera by Gilbert and Sullivan. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. An excellent adaptation of the well known Gilbert & Sullivan opera, done in color. The son of the Mikado disguises himself as a minstrel in order to avoid marrying an elderly woman. He falls in love with Yum Yum, the ward of the high executioner, and is willing to be executed if he can marry Yum Yum for a month. The acting, direction, color and music are all excellent. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. (British Production). Universal.
-
- m *PRISON WITHOUT BARS—Corinne Luchaire, Edna Best, Barry K. Barnes. Play by Gina Kaus. Directed by Brian D. Hurst. An interesting and forceful story of the reforms which a young woman started as head of a girls' reformatory in France, and the incidental complications when her fiance fell in love with one of the girls. A new and attractive actress in Corinne Luchaire, and an altogether good cast. (British production). United Artists.
-
- fj RENEGADE TRAIL, THE—William Boyd. Based on characters created by Clarence E. Mulford. Directed by Leslie Selerman. A pleasing western, with nice music and good riding. Hop-a-long Cassidy comes to the rescue as usual and helps Windy round up the rustlers. Paramount.
-
- m RISKY BUSINESS—George Murphy, Dorothea Kent. Original screen story by William Anthony McGuire. Directed by Arthur Lubin. A story of a radio commentator who acts as a go-between in a kidnapping case. A little faulty in spots as to plot, but holds the interest throughout. Universal.
-
- m SERGEANT MADDEN — Wallace Beery, Alan Curtis, Tom Brown. Original screen story by W. A. Ullman, Jr. Directed by Josef von Sternberg. A father-and-son story of New York's police department, in which arises a conflict between the father's devotion to duty and his love for his son. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

m SOCIETY LAWYER—Walter Pidgeon, Virginia Bruce, Leo Carillo. Story "Penthouse" by Arthur Somers Roche. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Romantic melodrama, about a gifted Park Avenue lawyer whose personal and professional career was radically changed by his getting an acquittal for an underworld client. Fast-moving, amusing and fairly hard-boiled. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f *STORY OF VERNON AND IRENE CASTLE, THE—Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. Original screen story by Richard Sherman. Directed by H. C. Potter. An enjoyable nostalgic record, rather romanticized, of the dancing Castles, their first meeting, their sensational success, to the war in which Vernon Castle met a heroic death far from the battlefield. It contains some heart warming re-creations of pre-war times, and lots of old music to stir the memories. RKO Radio.

f *THREE SMART GIRLS GROW UP—Deanna Durbin, Nan Grey, Helen Parrish, Charles Winninger, Robert Cummings. Original screen story by Bruce Manning and Felix Jackson. Directed by Henry Koster. Deanna's unspoiled charm and high spirits make a thoroughly delightful and warm-hearted film out of the story about a young miss who rearranges her two sisters' romances so that all turns out happily. Universal.

fj WILD INNOCENCE—Directed by Ken G. Hall. The story of a Kangaroo, how he became tamed and was put in a circus. Made in Australia it has unfamiliar types of background to give it interest. Herman Garfield.

f WINNER TAKE ALL—Henry Armetta, Tony Martin, Gloria Stuart. Original screen story by Jerry Cady. Directed by Otto Brower. A pleasant picture about the Gambini family, and their involvement with a cowboy who almost by accident becomes a prize-fighter. Well written and well handled. 20th Century-Fox.

m WITHIN THE LAW—Ruth Hussey, Tom Neal, Paul Kelly. Play by Bayard Veiller. Directed by Gusta V. Macnatty. A famous old melodrama, about a girl wrongly convicted of theft, and the revenge she sought on the man she considered responsible. The direction gives it a new life. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m *WUTHERING HEIGHTS—See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 16.

- f FISHERMAN'S PLUCK**—Zane Grey goes fishing. Ted Husing as commentator. Beautiful scenery and a thrilling ride through the rapids. Paramount.
- f GOOD SKATES** (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Some marvelous skating by Maribell Vinson and Guy Owen. Paramount.
- f HUNTING DOGS** (Ed Thorgensen Sports)—Just what the title says. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj KNOW YOUR HISTORY NO. 1**—Tells about how "Yankee Doodle" became a national song, and how Commodore Perry opened up Japan when Japan didn't want to be opened up. Columbia.
- f LAPPLANDIA** (Lapland, the Interesting Northern Province of Sweden)—Skiing above the Arctic Circle. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- fj MARINE CIRCUS**—Fish, in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f MASTER'S TOUCH, THE**—Color reproductions of famous paintings—Rosetti, Vermeer, Van Gogh, etc. Vitaphone.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 8, THE** (5th Series)—Concerning Mussolini's plans for restoring the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean, according to his speeches; what he has done to prepare the way for it, and what France is doing in self-defence. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED NO. 3**—Gold-beating; cartridge making; trap-shooting; flowers from wood pulp. Vitaphone.
- f MED SOMMARBARN PA SOMMARGARD** (Children on their Summer Vacation in Sweden).—The English title explains this film. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f MONEY TO LOAN**—One of the Crime Doesn't Fay Series, about loan sharks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SPORTING WINGS**—About flying by non-professional fliers. RKO Radio.
- fj STORY OF DR. JENNER, THE**—One of John Nesbitt's excellent Passing Parade Series; about the English doctor, Edward Jenner, who discovered the principle of vaccinating against small-pox. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f AN HOUR FOR LUNCH**—One of Robert Benchley's best. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE** (Serial) Nos. 6-9—Robert Livingston. Screen story by Sol Schor and Barry Shipman. Directed by William Witney and John English. A story of the early West, and the struggles of the cattle barons to keep homesteaders from cutting up the grazing land. Further adventures of the Lone Ranger, his Indian friend and white horse, Silver. Republic.
- f MINUTE FROM DEATH, A**—An exciting Floyd Gibbons adventure from real life. Vitaphone.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 6**—Movie stars in radio. Columbia.

Cartoons and Comedies

- f DAY AT THE ZOO**—Amusing cartoon of pictures and puns—clever. Vitaphone.
- f PORKY'S MOVIE MYSTERY**—The ghost of The Invisible Man haunts a studio because he was never starred but once. Amusing. Vitaphone.
- fj SMALL FRY**—Color cartoon of a little fish who wants to be a big fish, but is glad to get back to his mother after some terrifying experiences. Paramount.
- fj SO DOES AN AUTOMOBILE** (Betty Boop Cartoon)—Betty has a hospital for automobiles. Paramount.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c

Special Film Lists10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XIV, No. 5



May, 1939



Edward G. Robinson and Francis Lederer in "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" (see page 13)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

m BACK DOOR TO HEAVEN—Wallace Ford, Patricia Ellis. Original screen story and direction by William K. Howard. A story of a small town boy who lived on the wrong side of the railroad tracks and how this influences his entire life. The picture holds the attention, but decidedly leaves a bad taste in your mouth. Paramount.

f BROADWAY SERENADE—Jeanette MacDonald, Lew Ayres. Original screen story by Lew Lipton, John Taintor Foote, and Hans Kraly. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. A struggling vaudeville pianist steps aside to give his wife and partner a chance for a Broadway production. Jealous of her rise to stardom, he determines to make good in order to win her back after their misunderstanding. The music is good. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f CALLING DR. KILDARE—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Lana Turner. Original screen story by Max Brand. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Young Dr. Kildare, still an interne, gets involved in the results of a shooting affair. Interesting and amusing the human nature of the characters giving it a pleasant warmth. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13. Recommended for schools and libraries.

f *DODGE CITY—Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland. Original screen story by Robert Buckner. Directed by Michael Curtiz. A romantic melodrama of the west. At the close of the Civil War, Dodge City, an up-and-coming town was a hotbed of lawlessness. A young man who was an agent for

deputies clean up the town. The color is unusually good and the acting and directing are excellent. Alan Hale and Errol Flynn are both outstanding in their roles. Warner Bros.

f EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN—Bing Crosby, Joan Blondell, Mischa Auer. Original screen story by William Conselman. Directed by David Butler. A humorous story of a crooner of personal greetings for a telegraph office who rises to radio fame. He gets into difficulties with a stolen baby. Some excellent music and the entire cast is good, especially Bing and the baby. A good word should also be said for Mischa Auer. Universal.

f FAMILY NEXT DOOR—Hugh Herbert. Original screen story by Mortimer Offner. Directed by Joseph Santley. An amusing comedy which would fall rather flat without Hugh Herbert. It concerns a poor plumber, his ambitious social climbing wife, a daughter who wants a husband, a son who thinks he is a money-maker, two small children and a dog. Just a series of funny everyday happenings. Universal.

f FIRST OFFENDERS—Walter Abel, Beverly Roberts. Based on story by J. Edward Flavin. Directed by Frank McDonald. A story of a man who starts a farm to teach boys a useful trade, to make them good citizens. Columbia.

f FIXER DUGAN—Lee Tracy, Peggy Shannon, Virginia Weidler. Based on play "What's a Fixer For?" by H. C. Potter. Directed by Lew Landers. A circus story, with a woman lion tamer, a little orphan girl and a strain of comedy-romance. Agreeable characters and atmosphere. RKO Radio.

m *400,000,000, THE—Directed by Joris Ivens and John Ferno. A documentary film of China's battle against Japanese aggression. Photographed in China, showing troop movements around Taiierchwang, which the Chinese recaptured from the Japanese, activities on the Mongolian border, the military council in Hankow and Canton just before the Japanese took it. A commentary written by Dudley Nichols and spoken by Fredric March, heightens the pictorial effectiveness of the film, which is valuable as an historical document. Recommended for schools and libraries. Garrison Films.

f GRAND JURY SECRETS—John Howard, Gail Patrick. Based on story by Davy Reis and Maxwell Thane. Directed by James Hogan. A story of conflict between a District Attorney and his brother, a reporter. The reporter interested in short wave radio, discloses the secrets of the grand jury. Holds the interest and that is about all. Paramount.

(Continued on page 22)

MAY 24 1939

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Using the Radio

IT is now nearly one year since the National Board of Review began its weekly Film Forum radio broadcasts. Thanks to the cooperation of the New York City station WNYC these have continued until now with only a short break during the winter months.

Our programs have been planned both for unity and variety. Our opening broadcast re-stated the National Board's opposition to censorship of the motion picture with some reasons for this attitude. From there we went on to bring as many available authorities as possible before the microphone, to give our listeners a point-of-view backed with real experience in the field of motion pictures.

Directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, John Brahm, William K. Howard and Dudley Murphy have discussed the problems of a director's work and their methods of handling them. Our cameramen have included Hal Mohr and Stacey Woodard. The March of Time and the Fleischer Studios have sent members of their staffs to explain the backgrounds of edited news reels and cartoons. Otis Ferguson, Frank Nugent and Howard Barnes have represented the New York film critics, and Langdon Post and Dr. Boris Morkovin have spoken on sociological values and problems of film study. Other broadcasts have covered film research work, talent-scouting, foreign films, scenarios and biographical films. Actors and actresses of the screen have been heard on their occasional trips to and from Hollywood.

In these regular broadcasts we are applying an idea which we have long favored and

which many of our affiliated groups through the country have put into practice. A number of groups have broadcast selected films and talks—Macon, Atlanta, New Orleans, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Memphis, Emporia, Kansas, Erie, Pa. are some that have used this medium. From this experience we are interested now in encouraging all groups to make use of any opportunities they may have to utilize their local radio stations.

We feel sure that the members of many groups will be interested in doing this. Some may feel, however, that their facilities are too limited, or that the problem of a regular broadcast is too complicated. It is to these people that we wish to offer any assistance they may require. If they are interested and would like some idea of the lines on which such a program might be planned, we hope they will write to us for information. We have scripts of many different kinds on hand and will be happy to post them to those who are uncertain of how they should be prepared. We will be happy to make any suggestions as to topics of possible interest to their listeners. A carefully planned program of broadcasts, scheduled in accordance with the station's available time, entails no cost and presents few real difficulties. If the program is not too limited in its ideas, if it includes interviews, discussions, debates, with emphasis upon entertainment as well as education, there is no reason why it should not prove popular with every kind of listener, and at the same time serve to bring the work of the group before a public, which perhaps would otherwise not be reached.

The Actor's Work

By FRANCHOT TONE

A Talk delivered at the last National Board of Review Conference, in the series on "The Making of a Motion Picture."

I think perhaps of all the activities in the motion picture industry the actor's are the least easily analyzed. I know the results of an actor's activities are the most quickly apparent—in fact sometimes glaringly apparent—but the means by which those results are obtained are quite intangible to me. There are so many factors which enter into a performance in motion pictures.

In the first place, it is very hard to define just what acting is. Between the gurgles of a Baby Leroy and the highly skilled performance of a Motion Picture Academy Award winner, there is a wide range, such a wide range that it is very hard to say just where acting begins.

Then, too, there is the question of the scenes; the situations as laid down by the planner of the script, by the planner of the motion picture in general. There are the particular contributions of the director, the interpretation, the particular angles and lights that the cameraman sets up around a performance. There are the possibilities of cutting in and out between scenes, between characters, to such an extent that it is very difficult to say just how much of a performance is an individual contribution by the actor and how much is something done for him.

Consequently, you will forgive me if my talk is rather vague. I have never tried seriously to analyze exactly what acting is.

To begin, perhaps an easy approach would be to go through a list of the various names which have evolved in Hollywood to describe different types of actors.

Let us assume that the script is ready and the director prepared to shoot the picture. The actors have been assigned to their roles. Let us consider the first contact that an actor is apt to have with the production.

If the actor is a star, he or she is likely to know what is going to be done months beforehand. Stars have a chance to be in

contact with the progress of the growth of the script. They can talk with the producer and the director and the writers, and, to a certain extent, have the chance to prepare their activities.

But as you may have found out from listening to talks or from reading about motion pictures, the building of a motion picture is such a flowing process that from one day to the next you are not sure what scenes are in the picture and just what situations remain. In fact, you cannot really be sure, even when a picture is started, that what you are planning to do will finally be done as written, or even remain in the picture.

As for the featured players, whether they be under contract to studios or whether they be free lance actors who have been signed up for individual pictures, they have even less chance to find out what their activities are to be.

I have very often gone into a picture the day after I was told that I would be in it. I have also been sent a script and told to report on the set at nine o'clock next morning, and have been obliged to so do without any chance of really considering my material, of knowing what was required of me, or what possibilities there were in developing a characterization.

Then, there is another classification among actors; those called "day-players." These people are hired for specific scenes, sometimes small scenes, sometimes larger scenes. They are hired on a day-to-day basis, or on a contract if the scene is long enough. In general, they are given material concerning only their particular performance. Sometimes they get it a day in advance, or before that if they are lucky. Sometimes they get it only when they arrive on the set. This depends on the size of the scene and the size of their part. So they haven't much time to find out what they are going to contribute to the motion picture.

Then, below these categories, there are dress-extras, extras, stunt men, atmosphere and racial groups. I really do not believe

that these classifications have to know anything about the picture. They sometimes come around and say, "What kind of a scene is this? What are we supposed to be doing here?", or "It looks kind of interesting. What's the story about?"



Franchot Tone addresses National Board audience

Perhaps the best way of giving you some idea of the actor's contribution will be for me to trace rapidly a typical day of his life. It is a day that starts, supposedly, at nine o'clock in the morning. But in many cases it starts a good deal ahead of that: I have known cases where makeup required an actor to arrive at the studio as early as five o'clock in the morning. Then, sometimes there are so many actors to be made up that they have to come at five and stand about until the makeup man can get around to them.

Costumes have to be considered. Some people can walk into the studio wearing the clothes for the part and, without any makeup, simply appear on the set at nine o'clock and start their day. Therefore, there is a wide range here, too.

On arriving on the set the first thing that occurs is a rehearsal for the director. The director has planned out a scene and he places the actors in it. Some directors know exactly how they want the actors to move. Some leave it up to the actors to sort of feel

their way around the set. The director rehearses the scene, plans out which angle the cameramen will photograph, and the photographer sets his camera and lights.

All this may take 20 or 30 minutes, so the actors have a chance to get together on the side and rehearse their lines between themselves. Sometimes they do it with a special line director, known as a dialogue director. Sometimes they do it without any help at all. That is very flattering—when you are allowed to do it without any assistance whatsoever!

After a little while the photographer says he would like to rehearse everybody for the lights, and back you go on the set. The photographer generally finds something to be changed, so you go back to the side lines and he sets his lights again.

Of course, during this time some actors are allowed to have "stand-ins"; that is people who are similar to them in size and coloring, and who stand in the glare for them while the photographer sets his lights. This way the real actors have a chance to relax or to study their lines.

Finally, when the photographer feels he's ready, he calls for another rehearsal. For a little while the actor stands there, while the photographer puts the finishing touches to his lights; then he has a rehearsal for the director, generally to set everything perfectly. Sometimes the director has to change the action—in which case the photographer has to change his lights!

Finally, there is a rehearsal for the sound man, and a final rehearsal for the director, and the scene is shot. That is, the first take of the scene is shot. After the first take the cameraman manages to find something wrong with his lights and generally changes them a little. Then the director wishes to improve the action, so there is another rehearsal, or a series of them, and then the scene is shot again. That is take No. 2. Sometimes that is enough. Sometimes one is enough, but sometimes ten or twelve are required. I suppose twelve is a good average, but I have been in takes that ran as high as 36 or 40, with various interruptions in between.

Perhaps I had better give you an idea of some of the interruptions that may occur.

There is always a chance that the camera will run out of film. It doesn't happen very often, but in any case the camera has to be reloaded from time to time as there are only 1,000 feet of film in it. Sometimes takes run for quite a long time, consuming two or three hundred feet of film, so, after three or four, reloading is necessary and the action has to stop for a few minutes. Sometimes the sound camera runs out of film, or the sound track—which is being photographed in another part of the studio—has to be reloaded, or the director wishes to change his action, or the cameraman to change his lights.

Then, there are various external, extraneous factors which may obtrude. An airplane overhead can ruin the take for sound, or a truck going by outside the studio, or outside the sound stage. An actor may even forget his lines. Also, something funny may happen; somebody may give a peculiar inflection and the actors cannot control their laughter. The film inside the camera may buckle. The camera is very sensitive and buckled film means a short wait while the camera is taken apart, put together again and reloaded. Or the valves in the sound machine, which are very delicate instruments, may break under the impact of an unusually loud noise. Or a microphone shadow may appear in the camera range, if the man at the mike is a little late in getting his equipment out of the way of the moving action.

Also, it is quite possible for an assistant cameraman to miss the focus. The camera is a very delicate mechanism, and you cannot look through it at the time the scene is being photographed. It has a mechanism on the side where the focus is measured down to the last inch, and if by any chance the assistant cameraman does not have his focus exactly right, the scene is no good.

Then, of course, the makeup is apt to go back on you. The star's coiffure is apt to become disarranged. People need powder to take the gloss off their faces, because faces get shiny from perspiration sometimes, and believe me, the actor does perspire! I don't know how many thousand candle power they throw on some of the scenes, but it is sufficient to keep you hot and uncomfortable.

I might say, and so forth. Oh, I do remember one time two sparrows got into the sound stage. It was impossible to shoot a scene because the sound man heard the twittering of the sparrows no matter how loudly the actors talked. Finally, the only expedient found was to shoot off a blank cartridge, which silenced the sparrows long enough for the scene to be shot, and during the lunch hour they opened the doors and tried to shoo them out. Another time, one of the electricians went to sleep up in the gridiron above, and his gentle snoring intruded for a long time before they located him.

Of course, this procedure goes on all day long, with variations. Very often a director will set up his first scene in the morning for what is called a "long shot." That may be anywhere from 30 feet to an even greater distance.

The process of shooting such a scene may perhaps have been explained to you, but for clarity I would like to go over it. It is done with the camera moving gradually in toward the actor from different angles, until the final result, the closeup. Some scenes do not require a great many angles, but I have known one scene to take as many as 30 or 40. That is one scene of, perhaps, two or three pages of dialogue.

The procedure varies, of course, with types of directors. Some directors prefer to go very fast. Some are satisfied with the first couple of takes. They would rather have one of the early takes because they feel these have a certain spontaneity which the actor loses in the process of repeating. There are other directors who are very anxious to have each detail very precise and very clear. In that case you can count on a great many takes.

It varies also with the type of picture. I have been in some pictures that took four or five months to shoot, in which case the pace, the rhythm of production, and the actor's work were very slow. On the other hand, they do make pictures in seven or eight days.

There is no way of telling which is the best method of production, as, naturally, different pictures require different techniques.

Types of scenes make for variation in procedure but, in general, what I have described is the kind of work that the actor does.

There is one peculiar feature of motion picture production which seems to interest people. I am often asked, "How can an actor keep any sense of continuity when scenes are shot without any continuity at all? Sometime you do the beginning of the picture at the end, and vice versa, and then you jump around from scene to scene."

Very few people that I know are able to maintain a sense of continuity, but I am sure directors maintain it. Continuity is something with which, perhaps, the actor does not need to bother.

It is a question of necessity, I know, to jump around from one scene to another, because the studio has prepared a set, and it is necessary to get all the scenes on that one set shot at the same time, no matter where they may come in the continuity of a picture. Sometimes an actor is required for some other picture, and it is necessary to shoot all of his or her scenes as quickly as possible. However, the continuity is not one of the actor's problems, I can assure you.

From all of this you might surmise that the minimum requirements of an actor are memory and health. There is another factor which should be added to that, and that is recognizability. It used to be quite a problem, they tell me, in the old days, to find people who looked the same in any two scenes. That is what they call being photographic. These days, with the high fidelity and high speed films, I do not think this is such a problem. It might be put in as one of the minimum requirements of being an actor.

As for the problems of acting for pictures, here I am getting on a little more indefinite ground. You will pardon me then if I get even a little more vague.

The main problem, to my mind, is relaxation. The eye of the camera is so acute, and through the camera the eye of the audience is so close to you at times, that just simply being there and existing is enough of a problem in itself. The additional problems of emotion and timing are, in many cases, gilding the lily as far as motion picture performance is concerned, because the contributing factors, the possibilities of cutting, the possibilities of pruning the actor's performance

afterwards, makes it sometimes very easy to register almost anything you want.

I haven't much more to say about the actor's contribution to motion pictures. Beyond this point it gets even more indefinite. So perhaps I would be allowed to close my talk and ask if there are any questions anybody would like to ask on any points that might be of interest.

QUESTION: Can you tell me whether you feel more relaxed on the legitimate stage than you do before the camera?

ANSWER: I feel more relaxed on the legitimate stage because, after all, on the legitimate stage the actor carries all the burden of creation at the time of performance. He need have no fears of what may happen to his performance, because it is right there. It is much easier to relax with the results immediate, than when they are quite a way off, and in the hands of so many other people.

QUESTION: If an actor has a strong feeling about the emotion of a picture, is he allowed to express that when it is contrary to the director's idea? Suppose you were asked to do a performance in a way that you did not feel was the right one, would you be allowed to suggest a change?

ANSWER: Yes, of course. Often scenes are shot two or three different ways. If a director feels very strongly that the scene should be shot as one emotion, and the actor feels strongly that it should not be, it depends on the bargaining power of the actor. However, the directors that I have met are generally very willing to take suggestions from actors as to their feeling about their parts. If there is disagreement the director will very often shoot the scene two different ways. One or the other will be junked in the cutting room.

QUESTION: When a scene appears on the screen shot from a number of different angles, was it done on the set with various cameras shooting simultaneously or did they use one camera and shoot a few feet from one angle, then cut, and shoot from another angle?

ANSWER: Both ways are used. Often two or three cameras cover one scene. But the general method is to take each individual angle by itself. It gives the photographer

much more of a break. He has only one angle to consider at a time.

QUESTION: Could you tell us something of the difference between stage acting and screen acting?

ANSWER: Well, I do not think there is much difference, except in the question of continuity and the contact with an audience. The latter is a great stimulation, and may often cause a variety in performance which one would not get away from an audience. The stage has much more of a feeling of spontaneity about it because of the audience, because of peculiar factors, of which I know nothing, but which make themselves apparent in a difference in audiences. For instance, on the stage, a Thursday matinee audience is an entirely different entity from a Saturday night audience. This makes you act differently. You get a feeling from the audience. You begin to feel what particular angles of the character they like; what particular angles of the play they like. It is sometimes possible to change your performance, to do it minutely, but still importantly. As for technique I believe the same problems apply on both stage and screen.

QUESTION: How much ad libbing are you

allowed when you are appearing before the cameras and on the stage? There must be a difference.

ANSWER: I would say not. Perhaps there is more ad libbing for the camera. Very often in the heat of a performance, and as a result of quick preparation, the actor will come out with better lines than were intended, but very often you will find that the lines, as given, are much better than anything anybody can ad lib.

QUESTION: Do you like acting in New York better than in Hollywood.

ANSWER: I cannot say I do, no. I would hate to be cut off from any part of the entertainment business. In fact, what I am looking for is a little bit of variety.

QUESTION: Is there any role that you played that you like particularly well, and why?

ANSWER: Well, I was in Hollywood six years, and made 36 pictures, and it would be awfully hard to choose one out of those. I had three or four parts that I liked very much. I liked *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Bengal Lancers* and a little number called *Love on the Run*. That was really my favorite picture.

Montage and the Creative Camera

By SLAVKO VORKAPICH

An address delivered by Mr. Vorkapich at the National Board of Review Conference, including also the answers to some questions put to the speaker following his address. Mr. Vorkapich of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is the foremost authority on montage.

A few years ago when I was hired by one of the major studios to make certain montage sequences I soon ran into difficulties with the production manager. He had the idea that montages were made out of odds and ends of film found on the cutting room floor, or scenes shot by the director, or stock shot scenes from different news reels, or various bits out of past pictures. When I began demanding actors, and wanted to shoot some scenes and needed a pool with about 100 pounds of mercury in it, and a newspaper front page enlarged and reproduced on a large sheet of cloth, about 10 x 12 feet, he didn't like it a bit because, in his opinion, that simply added to the cost

of making the picture. He said, "If I ever meet that guy Montage I'll wring his neck."

Lately, I have been getting some fan mail. I am asked to explain what the word "montage" means. Some writers spell it like "montague". Some ask me whether it is a lens, or the name of the Frenchman who invented the camera. So I have written a little definition of montage that I usually send to all who inquire. I will give it to you now.

"Montage is French for any kind of mounting, assembling, putting together. Like many other words, it has a general and a special meaning. Thus, the making of a complete picture, the assembling and putting together of individual strips of film, is montage in its general meaning. Its special meaning, with which we are concerned, denotes putting together two or more images, one next to another, one after another, or

one on top of another—so-called super-imposed shots—to depict an event, to suggest lapse of time, to convey an idea, to arouse an emotion, to express a state of mind or create a mood or atmosphere. This mounting of images, besides being expressive, must possess a certain visual right.”

Now, montage is a form of putting strips of film together. Well, regular production editing is montage in a general way, but there is a slight difference. Production cutting, editing, which is called “continuity cutting,” strives to be as unobtrusive as possible, unnoticed. It strives to make a story run smoothly.

I will give a simple example. Suppose we have a long shot of a man entering a room and sitting at a desk and picking up a telephone. Now, you would show a long shot of that in the regular production manner, and a closer shot of the man at the telephone. So, gradually coming to the picking up of the telephone from the long shot you would cut to the close shot of the man sitting at the desk; then a closeup of him picking up the telephone and talking.

By contrast, montage uses cuts as a definite element in creating an effect. If in montage you wanted to emphasize the importance of this man telephoning, you would cut immediately from an extreme long shot to a very close shot of the man at the telephone, to jar the audience, to get a kick out of the cut. Comparing it with a sound, I would say that continuity cutting is like the roll of a drum. While in montage it is like beating of the drum, where you get a sense of rhythm out of each beat.

The simplest form of montage is that depicting an event which usually consists of very violent physical action or movement. Earthquakes, wars, riots and so on.

Now, these are done in a so-called analytical way. Our minds when visualizing a scene are used to visualizing it in a sort of impersonal way, as though it were someone singing on a stage.

When you try to think of a scene like a war scene, your first impulse is to think of it as an event, seeing it away from you, as on a stage, impersonal. In order to make it much more intense it is necessary to become more omnipresent with a camera, to

get into it and list the action from so many different angles. By putting these together you get a much more intense effect, rather than a very impersonal view.

Now, there is a more complicated, so-called “ideological,” montage that tries to express an idea. When you strike a note on the piano the note by itself does not mean a thing. If after that you strike another note, the second note becomes affected by the first one. The two notes put together create a part of a melody, if they are harmoniously related. Such a thing happens in montage. Your individual shots may not mean a thing, but when they are put together each subsequent shot is affected by the preceding one.

A famous Russian director, I believe, made an interesting experiment. He shot a scene of a man just staring ahead, just thinking. I believe he even gave him a mathematical problem in order to get the tension there. The problem was, “How much is three times 295?” and while the man was weighing that, he photographed him. Then he cut the scene in two, into a first part and a second part. The scene contained no action, just a man staring ahead and thinking.

In between the first and second parts he cut in a thought of a plate of food. So on the screen we saw first, the man thinking, second, the cut of the plate of food, and third, the man thinking again. But the second shot had actually introduced something new. It had been affected by the preceding shot. You had the impression that the man was actually hungry, thinking of food.

This is like music; the following note is affected by the preceding note, and each subsequent scene is affected by its predecessor.

Then the director used the same closeup of the man thinking, and cut in between the first and second part a shot of a very good looking woman. Now the closeup followed the picture of the woman and it acquired a new expression. You felt that the man was in love with the woman and was thinking and dreaming about her. That is how shots affect each other in montage.

He also tried putting a shot between of a dead body on the floor. At once something sinister appeared in the following closeup,

despite the fact that the closeup was the same one in all three experiments.

Often montage consists of so-called time lapses. A child grows up to be a man, or lovers separate, travel separately, and after ten years they meet again. We are asked to cover these time lapses by a series of pictures. For that we often use many so-called camera tricks, laps and so on. They have a psychological value.

Try to think of the past month of your life. Certain impressions will come to your mind. They will be superimposed on each other and be changed and merge from one to the other. In fact, the camera offers us many psychological devices in order to create very potent effects on the screen.

One can express emotions purely through filmic means; through images; not merely by relying upon acting or dialogue.

Now, as to a little theory. A good montage is a very exciting thing to look at if it is good. Why is this so? From childhood our interest in motion, in movement, is very intense. The child is carried in his mother's arms around the room. This means things move and things change, pan around, and the ceiling changes. He is rocked in a cradle. He plays on a merry-go-round. His organisms get used to movement and he reacts to movement when he sees it on the screen.

Experience has taught us that certain movements have very, very strong physiological effects. Sometimes we almost feel dizzy when we see a very strong movement on the screen. The movement creates a so-called kinesthetic reaction in our organism, because whenever we move the scene before us changes, and when we see movement we react in the same manner.

I have found out that very exciting effects can be obtained by shooting scenes in such a manner that movement will create a physical reaction, and by putting such rhythmic scenes together.

Each art explores its own world. Music explores the world of tone, painting that of line and color, sculpture that of solid form. There is a whole new world to be explored yet, that of movement, and a wonderful new instrument has been given to us in the camera.

So far the camera has been used mostly as a passive sort of instrument, as a recording instrument to record an actor's acting or writer's story, but it has not been used much in a creative manner, it has not sought those interesting movements around us, and tried to build them into a rhythmic picture to express our emotions. It must learn not to rely upon words which belong to literature, but try to express something through movement. A dance is an example of this, in a limited way—it shows the movement of the body on drapery. There is such an infinite variety of motion around us which, if properly explored with the camera in a creative manner and put together will, I think, create a new art.

And the same, perhaps, applies even to sound. The sound recording instrument has also been used in a passive manner so far; merely to record action, speech, music. It has explored the world of tone, but there is a world of noises around us and very beautiful sounds that could be organized by means of the sound camera into a really new art.

Well, these are theories which I like to play with, but I would rather make films than talk about them. If I am not very explicit it is because I am trying to express myself more in images than in words.

QUESTION: You speak of sound creating a new art. Mr. Mendoza referred to the fact that in a certain scene in one of his films he used a combination of instruments that he never had used together before, and he secured an effect that otherwise would have been lost. It was a celestial scene of some sort. Is that what you mean?

ANSWER: I do not mean the use of musical instruments. There are a lot of natural sounds that could be employed, by means of distortions, overlapping, and amplifying, and so forth.

QUESTION: After the shooting of the film?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: In one of the closing scenes of *Three Comrades* there are two men standing by a grave, and in the background is a city. The men remark that there is firing in the rear. Would you call that a montage effect?

ANSWER: No, that is not a montage. That is a single scene. A montage is created through inserted images.

QUESTION: In the picture *Made For Each Other* there was a scene of Carole Lombard running out of a night club. The camera was in front of her, moving away from her. She was running toward the camera, there were balloons and New Year favors, and men's arms and people's faces that flashed back and forth in front of her. It gave the effect almost of montage. Do you think it is possible without editing or cutting the film in any way, by arranging the actual details and using the one camera to photograph it, that you can have the effects of montage?

ANSWER: I do not believe so. If we get only one impersonal view we do not get a strong, intense effect. If we are right in the midst of an action, if the camera becomes an omnipresent eye, seeing a scene from many different angles, by putting the separate shots together you get a much more intense effect. A single scene does not have life. A scene on the screen only lasts or has a life for about three or four seconds; after that it goes flat. The first impression is fresh, new and alive. If you look at it for a long time it becomes dull. If there were no story or dialogue to carry it on, photographically and emotionally it would become dull. That is why we change angles continuously. I think an Englishman made a very interesting experiment with that. He made charts and diagrams to demonstrate how long a scene is interesting.

QUESTION: Is it true that stock shots play a great part in montage?

ANSWER: Unfortunately; but they are not shot in montage technique. They are shot very impersonally. It has been found that there should be a lot of movement in a montage scene. One remembers such exciting montage sequences. Stock shots are very long shots where you see a caravan away in the back moving, and nothing happens, and you have to keep it on the screen for a long time in order to convey what is going on. In montage you should see immediately what is happening and you should get a very graphic impression from it.

QUESTION: In the picture *Topper Takes a Trip* you see a figure disappear from the

view of the audience on the screen. I understand this is done by covering the person on the film with another piece of film and gradually blocking them out. Is that photo montage?

ANSWER: No, that is trick work. Montage is the use of the imagination in assembling various shots. Montage uses no camera tricks, but the only secret of montage is imagination. The shot that you speak about was explained very interestingly in *Life Magazine*. Although montage uses all the possibilities of the camera, it does not use them meaninglessly, but only when it is for the best. I believe in putting life into inanimate objects. I like to remember some of the scenes I did for a picture called *Conqueror*, where you saw coins piling up by themselves. That was done by letting the coins fall down, and I reversed the film so that they came up. But this has nothing to do with montage.

QUESTION: I think it is a great pity that we haven't got pictures to illustrate this talk. I see from the questions that we are not at all clear as to what montage is. Would you mind naming the montages you have done in pictures so that we will really be able to study the matter on the screen.

ANSWER: One of the last ones was in the picture called *Sweethearts*. Jeanette MacDonald was separated from Nelson Eddy and they traveled in separate companies all over the country, singing. That covered a period of a year or so. I had to express that in about 250 feet of film. I had to prepare and make sketches. Thus I got the actors and the principals in the cast, some shots of the trains, curtains going up, and scenes from the shows they were singing in, and shot all of those individually, separately. After that I cut the scenes together and got my effects by overlaps and superimpositions. This is done on a so-called optical printer, not a camera, which rephotographs the film. For such things I make a very precise diagram with explanatory charts for the man who does the optical printing, telling him how to do it, and where to start to overlap from one scene to another. *Shopworn Angel* also has montage examples. In the beginning there is a sequence depicting the entry of the United States into the war. You

see the whistles blowing and men in the factories leaving their work; men being enlisted. There was a wave of newspapers engulfing the whole country. That was a montage scene. Usually when we have to express a mood of this nature—battle-scene, wars, we do it with montage. Sometimes we are compelled for economical reasons to cut in newspaper headlines—to use words instead of pictures. I am very tired of this method.

QUESTION: You stated the camera has heretofore been used as a passive medium. In Eisenstein's picture *Potemkin* there is a scene where the doctor, who has refused to parcel out correct food to the sailors, is cast overboard and the camera focuses upon the pince-nez that is caught on the rail.

ANSWER: That is symbolic montage. In that film the camera was used creatively throughout. Unfortunately, we do not see much of that any more. As a rule the whole picture relies on dialogue and acting in order to convey the story. But can you visualize a whole story told in images and movement? That would be a creative use of the camera. That is a creative assumption. There is a possibility of a new art developing in the use of the camera, an art that does not rely on mediums like language or acting, but elaborates on the example I gave you of the man simply thinking, with an image cut into his train of thought. This is creative camerawork. The man did not have to act. He merely thought. The camera created images, inserted them, and gave meaning to his thoughts.

QUESTION: In a sense you would have the camera take on a towering significance displacing the actor and the music and everything else that is there. Does this not mean laying undue importance on the camera?

ANSWER: Not on the camera, but on the man who uses it. It is not the paint that matters, it is the painter who uses it. There will always be cameramen who can use their instrument creatively—if there are not, we can depend, perhaps, on a good writer. You can photograph a good story in many ways and it will still be pretty good.

Instructional Films at the New York World's Fair

WE had hoped to give readers of this issue a carefully detailed description of the documentary movies showing at the Fair. Judging by the lists of promised showings it seemed an easy enough job to saunter from one building to another, sampling the movies and getting a good idea of what was likely to be shown in the future. But unfortunately the Fair, when visited, was still too much in its preparation stage to permit any such description, and so, for the present, we can only give you an idea of what is now being shown or will be shown in the national pavilions or industrial exhibits.

The Federal Government Pavilion hopes to have started screenings about the time this goes to press. They will have Federal and State films. *The River* and *The Plow That Broke the Plain* are down; as well as Hollywood's special contribution to the Fair, a film on the history of the United States for the last 150 years. This will be composed of extracts from feature pictures made in Hollywood.

The British films were the only ones showing at regular hours and according to a regular plan. It seems likely that their theatre will have about a hundred shorts to draw on in the course of the summer. Their program will be changed every week, and there will be four showings a day. A very good selection of films had drawn a thousand people into the comfortable little theatre on opening day. There was a Paul Rotha short, *Roof Tops*; *Sheep Dog*, an enjoyable picture of the life of a Welsh shepherd and his dogs; *Americans in England*, showing historic sites in England and their connection with United States personalities and history; a study of manouvers at sea called *The British Navy*; an up-to-date newsreel; and, finally, a study called *Monkeys and Apes*, filmed at the London Zoo under Julian Huxley's supervision. This is a most fascinating short—we see our ancestors in a variety of forms and activities with an excellent sound track to present their cries and provide a rhythmic accompaniment to their

(Continued on page 18)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Confessions of a Nazi Spy

Screenplay by Milton Krims and John Wexley from an original by Leon G. Turrou, directed by Anatole Litvak, photographed by Sol Polito, produced and distributed by Warner Bros-First National.

The Cast

Ed Renard	Edward G. Robinson
Schneider	Francis Lederer
Schlager	George Sanders
Dr. Kassel	Paul Lukas
Hilda	Dorothy Tree
Attorney Kellogg	Henry O'Neill
Mrs. Schneider	Grace Stafford
Mrs. Kassel	Celia Sibelius
Erica Wolff	Lya Lys
Scotland Yard man	James Stephenson
Krogman	Sig Rumann
Philips	Fred Tozere

OH yes, it's propaganda—propaganda in the sense of expounding or exposing something in such a way that people's feelings, or judgment, or both, are likely to be influenced on the question involved. The word "propaganda"—originally used for a system of spreading the Christian faith—has, particularly since the war, had much unpleasant meanings, some of them even sinister, and we are prone to apply it mostly to things we don't agree with, or dislike, or are afraid of. Beneficent propaganda is more apt to be called "educative," or something equally eudemonistic. But *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* can hardly escape the term, being as disturbing a film as the studios have turned out in many a long day. It will disturb pro-Nazis and anti-Nazis as well as people who don't want to be disturbed by anything, including those who believe in letting sleeping dogs lie, or if the dogs are not sleeping they are only barking and not likely to bite, or if they do bite they won't bite us. It is a remarkable example of the superior effectiveness of the

screen over any other medium for stirring emotions for or against something.

The film is based on the records of the Nazi spy trials of a while back, and its technique is craftily devised to differentiate the picture from the usual fiction tale. Without stopping to tell who wrote or directed it or what actors are playing in it, it swings straight into its story in March of Time style. With enough documentary material, or material given documentary treatment, to create an effect of the whole thing being actual news, it gradually builds up the characters of several people who are related in one way or another to Nazi propaganda in America and Nazi espionage in America. After these people and their activities have been established, the Federal Bureau of Investigation comes in, the spies are detected and rounded up, and those who have not escaped or been shanghaied to Germany are brought to trial and convicted. In essence a fairly simple detective story, but with implications of stunning force.

The spy business is pretty unimportant in one way: most of the information forwarded with so much secrecy to Berlin would seem to be available to any enquiring reporter. But it serves as an authentic frame-work, undeniable as fact, on which to picture the really startling structure of the Nazi system of operating in the United States. This, too, is hardly to be called a secret: the Nazi contempt for democracy is well enough known, and the theory that a German is always a German wherever he happens to live, loyal to the Fatherland above everything else, and we have heard and heard of the Bunds, and of Nazi terrorization, and a little thought might reveal to any intelligent person that Nazi principles must inevitably

penetrate the rest of the world if they are to survive at home. But all this gets a terrific impact when good movie-makers put it on the screen, and seeing it in the peculiarly effective form that has been used in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* is like being struck a sudden and smashing blow. For the film rushes us through so many things that might have come out of the newsreels (many of them did) that we have no time to think that the man shouting his Nazi gospel is after all only Paul Lukas, and we have entirely forgotten that the picture has a star until well along toward the middle of it we are suddenly and surprisingly confronted with Edward G. Robinson at his desk in the F.B.I. So thoroughly have the actors lost their familiar screen identities that many people will not recognize Francis Lederer at all in the petulant little egomaniac who is the weak link in the spy chain, whose fantastic plottings supplied the first clue which led the federal men to their amazing and far-reaching discoveries.

This novel way of creating screen reality is what gives the picture its punch, what makes those who like the film admire it so enthusiastically, and what makes those who don't like it angry. It's not a film to be indifferent about, and serious people may well wonder whether it is a good thing or a bad thing that such a good film on such a subject should have been made. It is obviously a hate-breeder, and when hate comes in it is hard to argue calmly. It does no good to say that the Germans in the film are by no means all detestable monsters, when the horribleness of the Nazi agents (none of them so horrible, by the way, as many a Nazi face we see constantly in the newspapers and newsreels) makes us forget entirely the far more numerous people who are simply and inconspicuously the kind of likeable Germans we are accustomed to, like the ship captain and ship engineer, or the returning tourist. It does no good to point out that it is fanatical Nazism which is the villain of the piece, not the whole German race. If it stirs up hatred it stirs up hatred, and there is only the question, aren't there some things that should be hated? In behalf of our own institutions, and just as much in behalf of folks like that scared little man whose

agonized cries not to be sent back to Germany are one of the most terrifying things in the film. Or are we to be blandly good-natured about aggressive groups that drape the American flag and the swastika together, and wait till their "Heil Hitlers" mean something more dangerous than telling Herr Goebbels how many soldiers are in the army hospitals of the New York area? The film ends, rather complacently, on just that note, with the implication that when there is real danger we shall handle it easily enough.

That, however, is not the impression the whole film leaves, nothing nearly so mild as that. Tucked in between the more positive perils of Nazi penetration are hints of the equal peril of easy-goingness and indifference. The film does cover a lot of ground, in one way and another, with devastating competence. And it is Hollywood's first effective example of a kind of movie that the dictators have known the value of for some time in shaping the thoughts and feelings of their own people. If it shocks anybody into an unaccustomed violence of emotion, who was it (as Otis Ferguson has suggested so pertinently) that started this hate business? Not, obviously, the Warner Brothers.

Rated Exceptional.

J.S.H.

Juarez

Screenplay by John Huston, Wolfgang Reinhardt and Aeneas MacKenzie, based on "Maximilian and Juarez," play by Franz Werfel, and "The Phantom Crown," novel by Bertita Harding, directed by William Dieterle, photographed by Tony Gaudio, musical score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

<i>Benito Juarez</i>	Paul Muni
<i>Maximilian</i>	Brian Aherne
<i>Carlotta</i>	Bette Davis
<i>Porfirio Diaz</i>	John Garfield
<i>Alejandro Uradi</i>	Joseph Calleia
<i>Napoleon III</i>	Claude Rains
<i>Eugenie</i>	Gale Sondergaard
<i>Marechale Bazaine</i>	Donald Crisp
<i>Col. Miguel Lopez</i>	Gilbert Roland
<i>Miguel Miramon</i>	Henry O'Neill
<i>Riva Palacio</i>	Pedro de Cordoba
<i>Jose de Montares</i>	Montagu Love
<i>Dr. Samuel Basch</i>	Harry Davenport

WHEN a movie so sincere and handsome and expensive as *Juarez* comes along, done with such patent good intentions and good taste, it is disappointing not to be able to burst into involuntary and unreserved applause. There is so



John Garfield as Diaz and Brian Aherne as Maximilian in "Juarez"

much to be said for it! It relates with remarkable historical truthfulness an authentic episode of the triumph of the Munroe Doctrine over foreign despotism in the Western world, which fits in tellingly with the current exposition of Americanism on the screen, though its point is somewhat dulled by our knowledge that the ideals of Mexico's liberal president, so eloquently presented in the picture, were far from being permanently established by the execution of Maximilian. However, against a panorama of impressive pictorial beauty, a lofty drama of high aspirations in government is presented, well written and acted by a star-studded cast of excellent actors.

The picture deals with that period in Mexico's history when Louis Napoleon, third Emperor of the French, using the collection of some debts as an excuse, sought to set up the Austrian Maximilian as a Mexican ruler subservient to French interests and policy, and the resulting conflict between the idealistic Hapsburg and the oppositely idealistic native leader whose principles

paralleled those of Abraham Lincoln. It was an exciting and colorful period, animated by characters of heroic tragic stature. Benito Juarez, the Indian, who dreamed of a free and enlightened future for Mexico and fought for it against foreign usurpation and domestic treachery—what we think of as democracy was his ideal. Pitted against him the aristocratic and gentle Maximilian, just as devoted to the well-being of his adopted country but with the in-bred conviction that benevolent despotism was the only wise and effective way of rule. His lovely Empress, Carlotta, whose reason collapsed at the realization of the fraud practiced upon her husband by Napoleon. Porfirio Diaz, the ardent young disciple of Juarez, who was later to play so great a part in Mexico's development as her perpetual president. And across the ocean the third Napoleon, fitfully playing with the idea of getting a foothold in America.

A large canvas, and stirring events of great magnitude to picture on it. The surprising fact is that these events do not

emerge as very stirring. Probably that is because there are two definite and separate threads of interest, which never quite weave together. There is Juarez, heroic and impressive and admirable, with his own problems in his struggle to retain his leadership and free his people from foreign domination. There is Maximilian, equally heroic and impressive and admirable, waking up to the fact that Napoleon has meant him to be only a catspaw and determined to see the thing through on his own high level of nobility. Each man has his own drama, with its personal and public elements all entangled, which would be absorbing if we could follow it uninterruptedly. But we have to skip from one to the other, our sympathies divided and our interest dissipated. The two men are not antagonistic in ideals or noble intentions, only in methods. If they had come together each would have seen the worth of the other, and they must surely have united to reach their common goal, the good of Mexico. Their conflict was only factitious, though history made it so. That, of course, is the tragedy of it, but that sort of tragedy is not dramatic in the theatrical sense, which is the only sense that counts on the screen.

Another thing that makes it all move slowly, as well as in two lines that never quite come together, is that both men do far more talking than acting. Their speeches are dignified and they express the noblest of sentiments, but they make far too much to listen to and not enough to watch. Most of the physical movement of the picture is little more than by-play, without the principal actors having any vital part in it.

Most of the acting is on a superlatively high level. Paul Muni as the stolid Indian and Brian Aherne as the elegant and refined Emperor are remarkably effective contrasts in appearance, manner and speech. Bette Davis subdues her strikingly individual characteristics to a portrayal of the Empress Carlotta that is not only touching but over-toned with premonitions of her eventual tragedy, and her final flitting away into the darkness of madness is the most unforgettable moment in the picture. John Garfield makes the young Diaz the most lively and human person of them all, with that curious vitality that makes you forget that his speech

is pure Bronx, and countless others fill their places as they should be filled. Only the scenes in the French court seem bad, particularly the incredible Napoleon of Claude Rains. The film would have done much better without such a Napoleon in the flesh.

William Dieterle's direction is, for him, dogged rather than inspired. Perhaps he was hampered by a realization that he was working with a patriotic pageant instead of a drama, and saw no way of creating action with his camera better than moving up to a speaker with close-up after close-up. But they are quite lovely close-ups.

It is almost an ungracious thing to say, in spite of its earnest and painstaking excellencies, that *Juarez* is more of a duty than a pleasure.—J.S.H.

Rated Honorable Mention

Dark Victory

Screenplay by Casey Robinson from a play by George Emerson Brewer, Jr. and Bertram Block, directed by Edmund Goulding, produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

<i>Judith Traherne</i>	<i>Bette Davis</i>
<i>Dr. Frederick Steele</i>	<i>George Brent</i>
<i>Ann King</i>	<i>Geraldine Fitzgerald</i>
<i>Michael O'Leary</i>	<i>Humphrey Bogart</i>
<i>Alec</i>	<i>Ronald Reagan</i>
<i>Dr. Parsons</i>	<i>Henry Travers</i>
<i>Carrie</i>	<i>Cora Witherspoon</i>
<i>Miss Wainwright</i>	<i>Dorothy Peterson</i>
<i>Martha</i>	<i>Virginia Brissac</i>
<i>Colonel Mantle</i>	<i>Charles Richman</i>
<i>Dr. Carter</i>	<i>Leonard Mudie</i>
<i>Miss Dodd</i>	<i>Fay Helm</i>
<i>Lucy</i>	<i>Lottie Williams</i>

DARK VICTORY is the kind of movie that will tear you to pieces if you give in to that sort of thing, and leave you wondering, after your emotions have calmed down, why you ever let yourself be moved by something so obviously aimed straight at your tear ducts. It does not take any long wondering to arrive at Bette Davis as the answer. It's her show, her special kind of show, all the way through.

It has a plot that sounds pretty grim, about a girl with a brain growth that can be removed once but is sure to come back again, fatally. No happy ending possible. But it is not so grim to watch as it is fascinating, being managed with a good deal of theatrical effectiveness and blessed with a perform-

ance of its chief role that is genuinely human and moving. At first you are inclined to think this is just another of those mean parts with which Miss Davis has made such a reputation, a spoiled rich girl who drinks and smokes too much and delights in being disagreeable. But almost at once you begin to suspect that it is not a nasty disposition

go through, a thorough ennobling of character and a slow, sacrificial ending in which she sends him away and dies alone.

The Camilleish, East Linnish qualities are fairly well disguised by a brisk, up-to-date script and a set of characters that might have walked in from the generally accepted Long Island of smart fiction. Edmund



Bette Davis in the office of Dr. Steele (George Brent) in "Dark Victory"

but some physical ailment that is wrong with her, and—though rather tentatively—you hold yourself ready to extend a bit of sympathy. For a little while there is the rather morbid interest of finding out what is the matter with her, then the more ordinary movie satisfaction of seeing her apparently cured, a new creature all gaiety and generosity and in love with her doctor. But! Soon you and he know that she is doomed: the end will come, suddenly but surely and in no very long time, and she must be kept ignorant of it, and happy. The doctor, of course, falls in love too. Then she accidentally finds out the true state of things, and there is bitterness and readjustment to

Goulding knows how to direct such a script with slick, quick persuasiveness, though he could not restrain himself from wringing the last drop of agony from the ending, and crowning it with what must have been meant for a choir of angel voices.

He had a good cast to help him. Such dependables as Henry Travers and Cora Witherspoon in their respective specialties, Ronald Reagan developing abilities in the line of sympathetic comedy, George Brent solemnly kindly but with more substance to him than usual, and Geraldine Fitzgerald proving that her brilliant acting in *Wuthering Heights* was no flash in the pan. But chief of all Bette Davis, whose gamut cor-

responds with the most minute precision to the requirements of this part. She has never before seemed to be so entirely inside a part, with every mannerism and physical aspect of her suited to its expression. If she has deserved medals before, in parts of more dramatic validity, she deserves the prayerful gratitude of *Dark Victory's* authors for putting life into something that must have looked pretty improbable on paper. —J.S.H.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Remembering the Alamo

SAM HOUSTON is one of the almost epic characters of our national expansion, with a picturesqueness and scope of activity that would supply material enough for a serial—a mighty good serial, too, that would dwarf the Lone Ranger into insignificance. In *Man of Conquest* his exploits have to be trimmed down to feature length, which leaves room for only highlights and the broadest kind of motivation, but there is broad and sweeping action in it, and vigorous sketches of both the hero and Andrew Jackson. Most of the story deals with Jackson's dream of getting Texas into the Union, and Houston's part—from motives and by methods of his own—in making that dream come true. The remarkable thing about it, as history, is the almost unique frankness with which our methods of conquest are presented. American expansion was not accomplished by Sunday-school tactics, but by resolute and adventurous men who went after what they wanted without kid gloves. *Man of Conquest* makes that plain, and is all the better history for it.

The Screen Mikado

MANY people, no doubt, have looked forward to seeing Gilbert and Sullivan in the movies, and here at last is their most screenable operetta done by the D'Oyly Carte people and Kenny Baker with all proper reverence and lovely technicolor. It is more of a cinematic curio than a real movie, for no very perceptible effort has been made to do more than photograph the settings and costumes prettily, cut down the

acting time to screen proportions, and put over the words and music clearly and agreeably. The physical humor comes off least successfully—the antics of the comedians don't look very spontaneous, or even funny, through the eye of the camera. But it has all the pleasantness of a brand-new photograph of an old friend, and those who love it will delight in seeing it.

Instructional Films at the New York World's Fair

(Continued from page 12)

movements. You should ask for this film if you don't find it on the week of your visit.

Other famous documentaries such as *Night Mail* and *North Sea* will be shown, and judging from the list it seems that this theatre will provide an hour or more of good entertainment at least four times every day. The theatre seats 300 very comfortably.

The Australians hope to be under way with their showings soon, but as they have no movie house they have decided to show in the British Pavilion next door. Unfortunately this has brought a bit of difficulty and delay, so it may be some while before these screenings start. Ask at the Australian desk, as the listed shorts sound full of color and strange interest.

No information on the French documentaries was available at their pavilion, but a French movie-magazine lists a good selection of French and French-Colonial shorts. In *the Streets of Paris*, *Life of a Small Town*, *Profiles of France*, *Young Girls of France*, are some of the titles, and some of their best directors will be represented: Rene Clair, Jean Renoir, Jacques Feyder and others. The auditorium will hold 500.

Belgium is reported to be sending 21 documentaries: Switzerland a large number of studies of local industries and produce. The Russian Pavilion will have a theatre holding 700, Siam 250, Belgium 216, Sweden and Brazil each 200, Switzerland 150 and Cuba 100. Do not be led to think that the existence of a theatre in a building automatically means the showing of movies. Many of the theatres will have stage showings and demonstrations; many, however, are down for

travelogues and other films of their countries. Care should be taken about finding the hours at which films will be shown, as there will be few, if any, continuous showings.

When you have had your fill of national documentaries try going around to some of the big industrial buildings. You will find many entertaining and instructive 16 and 35mm. films being shown in them, usually in a constructive way, without too much plugging of the particular firm and product to irritate you. In all those I saw the makers had tried hard to build an entertaining frame around their product, and had been fairly successful in doing so. Johns-Manville, for example, has some very good studies on the subjects of heat, insulation and cooling; they explain the facts simply and comprehensively, with special appeal to the householder. Coty is showing a twenty minute short on the way its products are manufactured in the United States; Macfadden Publications have a short feature, with amusing spots in it, built around advertising. I haven't seen the Disney cartoon for the National Biscuit Company, nor the Popeye House, but don't imagine they'll need much boosting. The Petroleum Industry Exhibition has also adopted the cartoon idea with animated oil drops as characters to tell the story of petroleum and its uses. This falls short in many respects of what might have been done—it tells nothing new and explains still less—but the idea is a bright and creditable one. Coca-Cola Company is also listed in the animated cartoon field.

There are many other industrial and national film showings scheduled, and it is certain that by the time our next issue is ready many more of the films will be ready too. So we hope by then to be able to give you a really detailed summary of what to see. N.D.

A Home for the Motion Picture

THE motion picture, the most modern art form, has been given an appropriate home in the superb new Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The Museum estab-

lished a Film Library in 1935, which from that time to the present has been housed in separate quarters, but with the opening this month of the Museum's new six story building the library is now given generous space there.

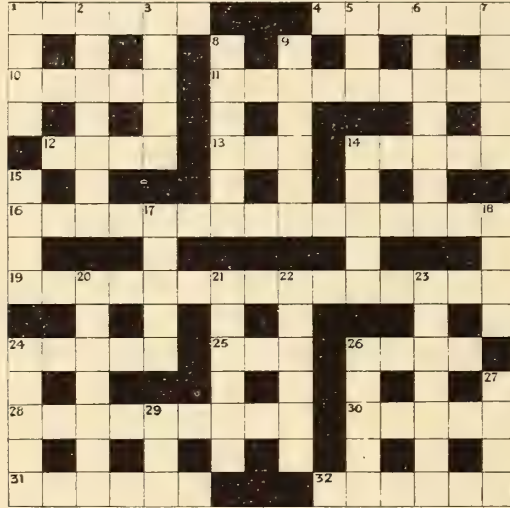
In a beautifully equipped theatre, seating 500, will be shown the various motion picture programs, assembled by the Film Library to compose the "Cycle of Seventy Films," from 1895 to the present decade. At the special pre-opening show attention was divided between admiration of the theatre and amused interest in *The Great Train Robbery*, of 1903. The Museum on this day was somewhat in the state of the World's Fair, as described above, but in spite of the last sections of a special lighting tube being fitted into place, the final placing of exotic plants against a background of glass walls, and some of the galleries with their pictures in place only on the floor, ready to be hung, we found the motion picture gallery all in order with its display for the opening exhibit "Art in Our Time."

This includes the work of Georges Méliès, French film pioneer, his various accomplishments in trick photography, in color films, and even in newsreels—covering the coronation of Edward VII, in 1902. And it may surprise you, if you are not a well-informed student of early film days, to learn that Méliès' film *Fairyland*, in color, with specially arranged orchestral music, opened simultaneously in Paris, New York and London, in 1903. Méliès presided at the second international congress of film distributors in 1909, the date, as you know, when the National Board of Review was formed, making us particularly conscious this year of 30 years of motion picture activity.

We believe our New York readers and our out-of-town readers coming to the New York Fair will want also to visit the Museum. There will be film showings daily in the theatre and always a film exhibition of some historical importance in the gallery, and there is, too, a hall of records, containing all kinds of materials having to do with motion picture art, history and technique. The Museum is located at 11 West 53rd Street. Admission is 25 cents.

Movie Cross Word No. 1

THIS is the first of what we hope will be a regular monthly series of Crossword Puzzles. Being the first it is difficult for the composer to know if it is likely to prove too hard or too easy for readers, and we would welcome criticisms or suggestions from any who go to work solving it. Send solutions and suggestions to the Crossword Puzzle Editor. The correct solution—and your name if you got it—will be listed in our next issue.



ACROSS

1. John Brahm directed this picture for Columbia and called it *Girls'* (6)
4. He keeps the hair well trimmed, but sounds a bit like the last name of 5 Down. (6)
10. Heroine of *The Constant Nymph*. (5)
11. Spell it backwards and its what actors and actresses are in close-ups. (9)
12. The Russians made it lead to life in one of their pictures. (4)
13. Actress' last name. Her first two names suggest a wild flower. (3)
14. Often found trailing in costume pictures. (5)
16. Jackie Cooper was one recently. (Four words) (15)
19. Famous singer who was in *Under Your Spell* and other movies. (Two words) (15)
24. Put a synonym for smack in front of it to make it funny. (5)
25. Reverse it for the first name of a past master in make-up. (3)
26. Actor's first name. His last suggests he's a high stepper. (4)
28. Laughton scorned coming to gather them in his last picture. (Three words) (9)
30. First name of famous sister of 26 Across (5)
31. This actor's name is Edward (6)
32. A famous buster of the silent screen. (6)
3. Actor's last name. Did he take his first from a famous movie company? (5)
5. See 4 Across. First name. Didn't he go to town with Eddie Cantor? (3)
6. What every showman wants. (Two words) (7)
7. This romantic matinee idol's first name sounds like a retort to mother if you reverse it. (5)
8. First name of the founder of Famous Players Film Co. Now of paramount importance. (6)
9. of the *Purple Sage*. (6)
14. Heartfelt response to screen emotion. (5)
15. Gance directed *Life and Loves of Beethoven*. (4)
17. Would describe Frankenstein's monster or Dracula. (5)
18. Catalina Island is a famous for exteriors. (4)
20. Scripts have to be, but are not always shot as. (7)
21. Only the most high-brow people would say it was your best entertainment. (6)
22. Who's romance had the fate of a pricked tire in a famous old silent? (6)
23. Actor's middle name. Suggests endless devourance. (7)
24. Nimble-footed star's first name. Don't muddle the order of the letters or she'll become a Greek hero. (5)
26. "One of the series of pictures on a film" is how Webster describes it. (5)
27. This mountainous wrestler was in *Three Legionnaires*, *Big City* and other films. (4)
29. It might have been one of divorcement if we hadn't beheaded it and left it sick. (3)

DOWN

1. Part of the build-up in making movies, but found in tennis too. (4)
2. is made at Night. (7)

Notes from Abroad

THE British Film Institute's publication "Sight and Sound" takes us as far away as Malaya in their last number to describe the effect of motion pictures on local inhabitants. R. H. Wright, author of the article, arranged for a traveling showman to give screenings on an out-of-the-way plantation where—believe it or not—movies are unknown.

The interesting part of the article is not so much the effect of the movies on the ignorant audience, but rather the problems that the movie automatically brought along with it. Malayan coolies are still taught to believe that white men and women belong to a superior race, and the average movie is bound to contain something that might discourage such a belief. For this reason the commentator assured his savage audience that none of the stars in a gangster feature were white at all—just coolies dressed up; the pick of American coolies, in fact. This explained their scheming cleverness as gangsters. As for Laurel and Hardy—well, the commentator explained that Stan was really Olly's slave, and that was why their two figures were so disproportionate. Mickey Mouse took some explaining: eventually he was described as a special superior kind of mouse found only in England, a real household pet who was fed on cheese and played with the children.

We read all this with mixed feelings and the hope that soon the coolies will catch on and feed the commentator to the crocodiles.

"FILMINDIA" comes to us from Bombay with more serious material in what is really the same vein. They are sick and tired of having India made the home of screen rascals and traitors, and cite quite a row of American and European productions which have capitalized on people's willingness to accept the Indian as a symbol for all that is bloodthirsty and uncivilized. They cite *Wee Willie Winkie*, *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, *Clive of India* from the United States, *The Tiger of Eschnapur* from Germany, and Alexander Korda's unscrupulous *Drums*. They are fighting for the banning of *Gunga Din* at present, and would like to

see other films of this kind refused admission. The Secretary of State for India is praised for having caused the British Board of Film Censors to ban the making of *The Relief of Lucknow* on the grounds of its being unlikely to further friendly relations between Great Britain and India. *Filmindia* sees this, of course, more as a need for imperial unity in these dangerous times than as a real change of heart.

Many of us in this country must have wondered how much longer the movies were going to make revenue out of Indian devilry. Even setting moral and ethical reasons aside and viewing the matter simply from a business point-of-view, such productions seem foolish and short-sighted. India is probably the second largest potential movie-market in the world: can we expect its people to welcome productions that libel them? What is, perhaps, the most extraordinary thing of all is the fact that any company should attempt to show such films in India. How can they possibly be welcome in the supposed place of their original stories?

PRODUCTIONS from the French studios, pending or underway, include: *Christopher Columbus*, directed by Abel Gance (*Life and Loves of Beethoven* was one of his), which will be rich in exteriors shot in Grenada, Toledo, Salamanca and Cordova. It will open in Grenada in June. Gance will also direct *Paradise Lost*, starring Fernand Gravey and Elvire Popesco . . . Andre Maurois' "Edward VII and his Times" will be screened under the title *Entente Cordiale*, with director Marcel L'Herbier and stars Gaby Morlay, Victor Francen and Pierre Richard-Willm . . . Jean Renoir's *La Regle de Jeu* is well underway . . . Sacha Guitry's *Ils Etaient Neuf Celibataires* is in course of preparation. Harry Baur will appear in Jean Dreville's *President Haudecoeur*. Yolande Folde's prize-winning novel "The Street of the Fishing Cat" is in preparation. . . . Eric von Stroheim will star in *Sebastopol*, and share acting honors with Maurice Chevalier in *Piege*. . . . The indefatigable Jean Gabin, who seems to appear in a new picture every other opening day, is down for *Remorques*, and Danielle Darrieux for *Un fois dans la Vie*. . . . Rene

Clair, who's work as a director seems to have disappeared in the last few years, is coming back with *Air Pur* . . . Jeff Musso, who made such a brilliant start as a director with *The Puritan* is going to draw again from the writings of Liam O'Flaherty, and make *La Fin d'un Homme* from the novel "Mr. Gilhooley." O'Flaherty will handle the dialog, and Raimu and Jacqueline Delubac will be the leads. . . . A film now in production that is likely to be awaited with some eagerness here is *La Loi Du Nord*. It is being directed by Jacques Feyder, who made *Carnival in Flanders*, and will star Michele Morgan and Pierre Richard-Willm.

N.D.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

- f **HARDYS RIDE HIGH, THE**—Mickey Rooney. Original screen story by Agnes C. Johnston, Kay van Ripper, William Ludwig. Directed by George B. Seitz. The Hardys nearly inherit two million dollars, with varying effects on them. Mickey is getting more precocious with the ladies, and the series is getting more mechanical. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **HERITAGE OF THE DESERT**—Donald Woods, Evelyn Venable. Based on novel by Zane Grey. Directed by Lesley Selander. A good western melodrama. A young man who runs through his fortune in the East goes West to claim a heritage, and finds a bad man who is attempting to scare the settlers from their homesteads; he also finds plenty of he-man excitement and of course a lovely girl. Paramount.
- f **INSPECTOR HORNLEIGH**—Gordon Barker, Hugh Williams. Based on character created by Hans Wolfgang Priwin. Directed by Eugene Forde. A very satisfying mystery story, quite English in characters and atmosphere, which plays the game as fairly with the audience as with the detective, and is as amusing as it is exciting in its solution. (British Production.) 20th Century-Fox.
- f ***JUAREZ**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 14. For Schools and Libraries.
- m **LADY AND THE MOB, THE**—Fay Bainter. Original screen story by George Bradshaw and Price Day. Directed by Ben Stollhoff. A very amusing comedy of an elderly wealthy woman who cleans out the racketeers in her small town. Although the situations are improbable the entertainment makes you forget the improbability of the story. Columbia.
- f **LADY'S FROM KENTUCKY, THE**—George Raft, Ellen Drew. Based on story by Rowland Brown. Directed by Alexander Hall. A gambler wins half interest in a race horse. He goes to Kentucky to claim his half, and falls in love with the owner of the other half. The story holds the interest and the horses are lovely. Comedy is supplied by Hugh Herbert and Zasu Pitts. Paramount.
- f ***MAN OF CONQUEST**—Richard Dix, Edward Ellis, Gail Patrick. Original screen story by Harold Shumate and Wells Root. Directed by George Nichols, Jr. Recommended for schools and libraries. Republic. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. "Remembering the Alamo," page 18.
- m **ON TRIAL**—John Litel, Margaret Lindsay. Stage play by Elmer Rice. Directed by Terry More. A dramatic story of a man on trial for murder. His attorney springs a surprise witness which sways the jury. Warner Bros.
- f **RETURN OF THE CISCO KID, THE**—Warner Baxter, Lynn Bari. Screen story by Milton Sperling. Directed by Herbert I. Leeds. O. Henry's romantic hero helps some Americans get their ranch back. Colorful, full of action. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **SKANOR-FALSTERBO**—Edvard Persson. Original screen story by Henry Richter. Directed by Emil A. Pehrsson. The story of a bank clerk who is accused of embezzling and disappears into the country, where he joins the police force. Full of humor and comic situations, with the excellent Edvard Persson at his fattest and best. English sub-titles. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- f ***STORY OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, THE**—Don Ameche, Henry Fonda, Loretta Young. Original screen story by Ray Harris. Directed by Irving Cummings. An unusual and enjoyable story of the man who invented the telephone—interesting as important history, and for its warm human qualities. The atmosphere, also, is particularly good. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **STREETS OF NEW YORK**—Jackie Cooper. Original screen story by Robert Andrews. Directed by William Nigh. The story of a newsboy, whose ideal is Lincoln but whose brother is a racketeer. He is true to his ideal, with more help from police and courts than is usual in this sort of melodrama—a sort of Horatio Alger tale. Monogram.
- f ***UNION PACIFIC**—Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea. Based on a story by Ernest Haycox. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. A saga of the West. A real melodrama of the building of the Union Pacific Railroad. The hardships and privations experienced by the men who built the railroad, and their fight against lawlessness caused by the rival railroad. The production is well di-

rected and acted, gruesomeness offset by bits of real humor. Though the picture is lengthy it holds the interest to the end. Referred to Exceptional Photoplays Committee. Paramount.

m **WANTED BY SCOTLAND YARD**—James Stephenson, Betty Lynne. Play by Ralph Strock. Directed by Norman Lee. An interesting story of a man, known as "Fingers," released from prison continues his profession of crime until he meets the girl he loves. The production is nicely handled and the acting is good. The music also adds a lot to the picture. Monogram.

f **WOMEN IN THE WIND**—Kay Francis, William Gargan. Novel by Francis Walton. Directed by John Farrow. A woman enters a women's flying contest, winning in the face of storm, crack-up and a vicious rival, to earn the price of an operation for her brother. Pretty conventional in plot and details. Warner Bros.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- fj **BIG LEAGUERS**—The Chicago Cubs in training—lots of the plays in baseball shown in slow motion. RKO Radio.
- fj **DIAMOND DUST**—One of Grantland Rice series, about some of the fine points of baseball. Paramount.
- fj **GOING PLACES NO. 62**—Graham McNamee as commentator, showing how America has become ski-minded; the making of skis and some marvelous shots of skiing. Universal.
- fj **GOING PLACES NO. 63**—The working of a planetarium; ancient time pieces and sun dials. Universal.
- fj **JAVA JOURNEY**—A Fitzpatrick Traveltalk in color, picturesque and interesting. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **KNOW YOUR HISTORY NO. 2**—High bicycles; the evolution of the iron horse; the start of aviation; crazy inventions; the building of the Panama Canal. Columbia.
- fj **KNOW YOUR HISTORY NO. 3**—The birth of the National Anthem; showing the trial and death of Nurse Edith Cavell. Columbia.
- fj **MARCH OF FREEDOM, THE**—This picture is composed of bits from newsreels and compares America, the land of liberty with Nations ruled by dictators. Propaganda but educational. The main theme is "preparedness." Universal.
- f ***MARCH OF TIME NO. 9**—About how Japan is trying to become master of the Orient, and the difficulties that have stretched this attempt to two years of undeclared war and the drain of that war on the little island empire. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- fj **NAVY CHAMPIONS**—Showing how our navy men are trained for the service, ending with a good Army and Navy football game. Columbia.
- fj **ODD SPORTS**—Showing strange ways of playing games to amuse sport lovers. Columbia.
- f **PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 9**—Training boys for the Coast Guard service; an underwater photographer; fashion models. Paramount.
- f **POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 3**—Blind baseball players; kitchen gadgets; study of spiders; television. Paramount.
- f **ROAMING CAMERA NO. 1, THE**—Interesting items done in color. Vitaphone.
- fj **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 62**—Fascinating miniatures; a marvel horse trained by a minister; midget mules; road making in Holland, etc. Universal.
- fj **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 63**—A school boy builds a miniature roller coaster; a clock collector; learning to etch; a one legged boy who can play golf, swim and even dance. Universal.

- fj **SWANS**—Attractive record of the life, during one season, of two swans. Paramount.
- f **UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 5**—Making skeletons for medical use; the town crier of Provincetown, Mass.; Jean Parker has a gown shop and designs all her dresses. Paramount.
- f **VINTERSEMESTER** (Winter Vacation in Sweden)—What the title says, with fine snow-capes and good sports shots. Scandinavian Talking Pictures, Inc.
- fj **WEATHER WIZARDS**—How the weather man helped people save their orange crops from a frost. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **WHILE AMERICA SLEEPS**—One of the Crime Doesn't Pay Series on a particularly timely subject, showing how certain spies operated in an air-plane factory, and how they were caught. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f **CHAINED**—One of the Floyd Gibbons series of actual adventures, about a boy in danger playing pirate. Vitaphone.
- f ***FASHION FORECASTS NO. 3**—Unusually entertaining fashion show in color, with a bright commentary and lovely models. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj **LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE** (Serial) Nos. 10-13—Robert Livingston. Screen story by Sol Schor and Barry Shipman. Directed by William Whitney and John English. A story of the early West, and the struggles of the cattle barons to keep homesteaders from cutting up the grazing land. Republic.
- f **MR. AND MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD AT HOME**—Good organ playing, with singing and dancing. Vitaphone.
- f **MUSCLE MAULERS**—Wrestling so rough that it's funny—you have to take Lew Lehr along with it. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **ROLLIN' IN RHYTHM**—Different roller-skating acts in an amusing setting. Vitaphone.

Cartoons and Comedies

- fj **ALADDIN AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMP**—Popeye cartoon done in technicolor. Popeye finds the magic lamp which gives him all he wishes for. Paramount.
- fj **DONALD'S COUSIN GUS** (Walt Disney)—Donald's cousin, Gus Goose, visits him with a huge appetite. RKO Radio.
- fj **LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE** (Popeye the Sailor)—Popeye buys out a pet shop to set the dogs free, but when they are all caught by the dog catcher, he brings them back to the pet shop. Paramount.
- fj **WOTTA NITEMARE** (Popeye the Sailor)—Popeye has a terrible nightmare, but his trusty spinach saves him even in his sleep. Paramount.

Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures

AS a subscriber to this Magazine you are entitled to the **SELECTED PICTURES CATALOG, 1938-39**, so if you wish it, please let us know. This, the twenty-fourth annual issue, includes in convenient compact form all the pictures selected by the Review Committees of the National Board during the past year. To non-subscribers it is 25c per copy.

This tear-sheet is for your convenience.

I am a subscriber to the Magazine and wish the Selected Pictures Catalog, 1938-39.

I enclose 25c for the Catalog.—

Name

Address

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) 25c

Special Film Lists 10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status. free

National Board of Review—How It Works. free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils 10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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June, 1939



Henry Fonda as young Mr. Lincoln in the film of that title (see page 26)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
 m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
 j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
 *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.
-
- m **BLIND ALLEY**—Chester Morris, Ralph Bellamy, Ann Dvorak. Play by James Warwick. Directed by Charles Vidor. An escaping killer, taking refuge in a doctor's cottage, is psychoanalyzed and the reason for his criminal conduct discovered. Unusual in its material, and tense, though the scientific part is necessarily very much simplified. Columbia.
-
- f **CAPTAIN FURY**—Brian Aherne, Victor McLaglen. Original screen story by Grover Jones, Jack Jevne, William De Mille. Directed by Hal Roach. An adventure story of early Australia days, with escaped convicts helping settlers fight the cruel exploitation of profiteering land-grabbers. Like a western transplanted to a new setting. United Artists.
-
- f **CHAMPS ELYSEES**—Sacha Guitry. Story and direction by Sacha Guitry. An amusing "history" of Paris' famous boulevard and all the famous people who have strolled, fought and loved in it during the past two hundred years. Presented in the form of a history lesson it is an enjoyable imaginative travesty of historical facts with a certain basis of reality. (French Production). Tri-National Films, Inc.
-
- f **CRIME IN THE MAGINOT LINE**—Victor Francen, Vera Korene. Based on Novel by Pierre Nord. Directed by Felix Gandera. With the tremendous fortified line between France and Germany as a setting, a German spy commits a murder and almost escapes before he is caught. The novel setting gives special interest to a well acted melodrama. In French with English subtitles. Tower Pictures, Inc.
-
- m **DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES**—Emlyn Williams. Based on story "Norwich Victims" by Francis Beedings. Directed by David MacDonald. Emlyn Williams (author of "Night Must Fall") plays a sinister but engrossing role in a murder story that has a good deal of tension. The scene is in England. (British Production). Alliance Films Corp.
-
- m **ERAVAMO SETTE SORELLE** (We Were Seven Sisters)—Nino Besozzi, Antonio Gandusio, Sergio Tofano. Story by Aldo de Benedetti. Directed by Nunzio Malasomma. An amusing story of seven show-girls who convince an elderly Count with a past that they are his daughters. Trouble starts when the Count's son comes home and finds all seven installed in the family mansion. On the talking side, but can be followed easily without English titles. Much better than the average Italian production. Esperia.
-
- m **EXILE EXPRESS**—Anna Sten, Alan Marshall. Original screen story by Edwin Justus Mayer. Directed by Otis Garret. An alien is convicted as accessory to a murder and is ordered deported. Innocent and not wishing to leave America she escapes from the Exile Express and marries an American. Grand National.
-
- f **GIRL FROM MEXICO, THE**—Lupe Velez, Donald Wood, Leon Erroll. Original screen story by Lionel Houser. Directed by Leslie Goodwins. A comedy come-back for Lupe Velez as a fire-crackering cabaret girl who comes to New York to get on the radio. Lively and funny. RKO Radio.
-
- fj ***GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 27.
-
- f **GRACIE ALLEN MURDER CASE, THE**—Gracie Allen, Warren William. Novel by S. S. Van Dine. Directed by Alfred E. Green. A comedy all about a murder, with Gracie Allen getting herself and everybody else into trouble. Gracie seems a bit lost without her sidekick George Burns. Para.
-
- m ***HEART OF PARIS, THE**—Raimu, Michele Morgan. Based on story by Marcel Achard. Directed by Marc Allegret. A Russian girl living in Paris escapes being sentenced for murder through the sympathy of one of her jurors. When this juror takes the freed girl into his own home circumstances almost involve them in a new tragedy. A fine study of French life and character with excellent acting by Raimu. (French Production) Tri-National Films, Inc.
-
- f **HOUSE OF FEAR**—Irene Hervey, William Gargan. Original screen story by Thomas Fallon. Directed by Joe May. An exciting mystery play. A murder is committed in a theatre, and is not solved until a year

(Continued on page 24)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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June, 1939

20c a copy, \$2.00 a year

Dr. Pettit of the Board's Executive Committee Assumes New Duties

DR. Walter W. Pettit, who has been on the staff of the New York School of Social Work for 24 years, and its acting director for several months, has recently been appointed Director of the School by the board of trustees. This School, founded in 1898 by The Charity Organization Society, was the first graduate school for social workers in the United States.

The National Board of Review takes this opportunity to convey its recognition of Dr. Pettit's outstanding work in the field of social work training, and as a leader of ability in the field of social thinking and social endeavor. He has been a member of the National Board of Review since 1921, has served on the Executive Committee and the Committee on



Dr. Walter W. Pettit

Exceptional Photo-plays. During a part of this time he has held the chairmanship of the Board. To all these associations he has brought an understanding and a helpful interest which have been of real value to the work of the Board.

Dr. Pettit is known to many of our members and readers who have attended Conferences of the Board through his participation there as speaker and presiding officer, and he has upon occasion, when his schedule of activity permitted,

given generously of his time to the field work of the Board. We thus feel certain they will join with us in our expression of good wishes to Dr. Pettit in assuming this directorship of a school devoted to preparing students for work which is particularly important at this time.

Have you asked for the copy of the SELECTED PICTURES CATALOG 1938-1939, due you with your magazine?

Community Motion Picture Activities

It has been our custom to publish the reports given at the community activity session of the annual Conference of the National Board in various issues of our Magazine, along with the talks delivered at other sessions, but this year we are departing from that custom and have waited to publish them all in one issue. These reportings, from various groups throughout the country, published together furnish a useful textbook on community motion picture organization and program, filled with ideas and achievements, interesting to compare and helpful to follow.

Many other communities were represented at

Mrs. Frank R. Anderson
President, Cleveland Cinema Club

IN looking back on our past year activities it is my opinion that the most outstanding event in our club, was the celebration of Motion Picture Festival Week, May 16th to the 23rd. This observance was carried out at a suggestion made at The National Board of Review Conference one year ago.

The week proved so successful that we have decided to sponsor such an observance again this year, beginning April 12th and lasting for three days. We have definitely come to the conclusion that this type of celebration is very beneficial as a means of awakening the general public to this new way of regarding motion pictures.

We had splendid cooperation during our 1938 observance from our Cleveland Public Library, Art Museum, University, Federation of Women's Clubs (Motion Picture Department) and the local motion picture distributors, as well as all local newspapers and motion picture magazines. We planned definite programs for each day, our first being panel discussions by high school students in two of our large high schools. This program was under the supervision of our Youth Advisor and we had the cooperation of the Progressive Education Association of New York City. We also had a program in one of our elementary schools. Through the courtesy of the Erpi Class Room Films of New York, Dr. Howard Gray was kind enough to come to Cleveland for this program.

the Conference but the time limit of one session made it impossible to have more reports. We trust many of the others will be represented again next year and will contribute an account of their activities to the program, and thus to our Magazine as well. The number of reports this year was due to the willingness of the speakers to be limited to a short time and their ability to say much in that time, and also to the splendid way in which the session was directed by Dr. Walter W. Pettit of the Board's Executive Committee, leader of the panel.

The talks are arranged alphabetically according to the name of the speaker.

Western Reserve University participated in the week's activities with an evening entertainment showing a film that had been made around the college, called from *Pin-heads to Parades*. Invitations were sent to all colleges nearby Cleveland, and the attendance was most gratifying.

The Amateur Photographers Association of Cleveland sponsored an evening program with several of their members showing beautiful films they had made, most of them travel pictures in technicolor.

The Motion Picture Department of the Federation of Women's Clubs had as their part in the week's activities a program which brought out the thought of music and its relationship to motion pictures.

Our week, of course, could not be complete without some notables from New York, and we were most fortunate to have as guest on our regular Club Day during that week the Council Secretary of The National Board of Review, Mrs. Bettina Gunczy. Her topic was "The American Motion Pictures Abroad." She told the group also something of the work of the National Board.

The big climax to our week's activities was a banquet. Speakers for this were the Hon. Mayor Harold H. Burton, Mr. A. A. Trimble, Cleveland's double for our beloved Will Rogers, Mr. Harry Goldberg, Publicity Director, Warner Bros. Theatres, of New York, Ward Marsh, Motion Picture Critic for the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

We are very proud in Cleveland of our

Club Bulletin which is printed five times a year. We have a very large mailing list and we feel it has a definite place in our community.

We are also proud of our accomplishments in helping to promote and aid groups of school students in forming motion picture appreciation classes or clubs. These groups can be affiliated with our club and are known as Junior Youth Units. The membership fee is ten cents per member per year and we find most groups organize with a minimum membership of ten.

Mrs. L. R. Andrews

**President, Jacksonville (Fla.) Motion
Picture Council**

BEFORE coming up here I asked three of our Chairmen who have been quite active in the Motion Picture Council to jot down some of the things that they thought were outstanding this year in their work. The first information I have is from our Matinee Committee.

On Saturday morning we have a children's matinee, sponsored by the Motion Picture Council, under the direction of a Chairman with several members as chaperons. Up until the last year we have had special pictures that were featured for children. This last year the manager has been gracious in giving us first run pictures, providing they were acceptable for the children's matinee. We also have on this program a short picture, and a prologue by a group from the different schools in Jacksonville, which has proved most successful. The Council has been hostess to a number of groups. I suppose during the month we will average 150 or 200 boys and girls who come in as our guests. They are from the church schools, the boys' home and the various organizations.

Another activity that we feel has been quite successful this year is that of a group of junior reviewers. Our Chairman has succeeded in getting four reviewers from each high school in the city of Jacksonville. The theatre management was most cooperative in giving them tickets entitling them to a picture each week, with the admission ticket plus 10 cents. They are delighted to go and then report on these pictures.

Our Chairman of Visual Education is another who has done quite outstanding work. In one of the high schools they have 45 or 50 films in a library on science alone and this is really due to her promotion.

We have one group studying motion picture appreciation under the direction of an English teacher who has training in dramatic arts. We hope to have in our other high schools groups such as this. This is some indication of our work with the young people.

Mrs. Raymond R. Bear

**Motion Picture Chairman Pennsylvania
State D.A.R. and Allentown (Pa.)
Woman's Club**

THE first thing that we do in this D.A.R. work is to get a Motion Picture Chairman in every Chapter throughout the state. The number has been greatly increased in the last six months, I am happy to say. Some of the regents feel that this work is overlapping, that there are other organizations in their towns doing it and they are not interested. But they are becoming more and more interested and are appointing local chairmen.

The chief thing this Chairman does is to report to every Chapter meeting the rating of the current pictures in the vicinity. The next thing is to have one meeting each year devoted to motion pictures. This activity too has been increasing this last year. At that meeting they usually have a speaker who comes to them from the National Board of Review, or somebody else who will talk to them on motion pictures and get them interested.

They cooperate with any other organizations that have motion picture committees in their vicinity and they work with them. They have the guides and stills which are distributed to the libraries.

We are featuring this year, more than anything else, the organization through the English teachers of photoplay appreciation clubs in the schools.

In Allentown we have been doing that work for the last two years. We have no clubs but we send the guides to our English teachers in the tenth grade and they have their discussions with the children. We feel

that the children should be educated to appreciate and enjoy the good movies and as they take the word home to their parents in that way we can reach them.

We have a church school in Allentown that devotes every Friday afternoon and evening to the showing of motion pictures for children, regardless of age, race or color and they have crowded houses at four, six and eight. They show pictures that are interesting to all children. The local Chapters of the D.A.R. sponsor one of these pictures each year for the pastor of the church.

We have our committee that sits in on previews at the local theatres. Our pictures change every Friday. On Friday morning three or four of our members go to our three largest theatres in Allentown and preview the picture with the manager. Then we report the pictures to our organizations. At one time one of the shorts was objectionable to our women. They took it up with the manager and he cooperated very nicely and eliminated this short. We really have had no complaint to make. The managers have always cooperated with us in our work.

Mrs. M. Eaton Briggs

Chairman, Photoplay Guide

Burlington (Vt.) Motion Picture Council

THE Burlington Vermont Motion Picture Council has a representative membership from about twenty-five Women's Clubs in the City. The work of the Council can be divided briefly into three divisions.

First, the Photoplay Guide, which is printed once a week in the Burlington Free Press. The Guide was first started in 1932 and was written up by different members in their own homes. When I took it over two years ago a box was secured at the community Y. M. C. A. where all mail pertaining to the work was sent. Permission was obtained to keep the files and do the work at the public library. One afternoon a week the chairman and helper write up the reviews of the pictures for the coming week.

The paper allows us one column free of charge. To keep the reviews within this space we model our write-ups on those of the National Board of Review. The Mo-

tion Picture Review Digest, the Catholic Alumnae and several other reviews also furnish the information from which our write-ups are taken.

We divide our pictures into two classifications: Selected Pictures, ratings above average; Reviewed Pictures, ratings average. One theatre manager objected to our rating all his pictures as reviewed pictures. I told him when he gave us better pictures we would give him better reviews. Within a few weeks the standard of pictures shown in that particular theatre was raised, and now most of his pictures come under the Selected group.

All Photoplay Guides are kept in a scrap-book so that they can be used for future reference. We are endeavoring by the use of the Photoplay Guide and discussions in our meetings to have people become more particular in choosing the pictures they go to see and the ones they allow their children to see.

Second, the Educational Film Pool at the Robert Hull Fleming Museum of the University of Vermont. This pool was started by the school department in 1934 and at the present time there are 71 reels, representing 61 different subjects. Any school in Vermont may purchase one or more 16mm educational films and place them in the pool. For each film placed the school may use one each week. It is required that the school join the cooperative plan and make a deposit of \$5.00. From this deposit the Museum deducts a small amount for running expenses such as labels, cartons, postage necessary to send the film to the school requesting it, and other small expenses. The Council has a membership which is used by various schools throughout the state unable to join in the plan.

The third division is the Children's Christmas Matinee. This year around 1500 children enjoyed a two hour program. The films were donated by the theatre managers and the admission charged was five cents, a toy or an article of clothing. The toys and clothing were distributed among the different charitable organizations in the city, and some of the money will be used to purchase a new film for the Educational Pool. This is done each year.

Mrs. B. B. Cheney

Secretary, Film League of Nashville, Tenn.

IN May, 1934, Mr. Thomas Mabry was largely instrumental in organizing the Film League of Nashville. The purpose of the league was two-fold, to bring to Nashville certain outstanding classics in film history and to secure the best foreign films of the year. The first were for the benefit of members who were interested in the history and development of the film, and the latter more particularly for the college students at Vanderbilt University, Ward Belmont and George Peabody College for Teachers, who were engaged in the study of French or German.

Since the season included not more than twelve meetings, held on Sunday evenings at a neighborhood theatre, it was easy enough to secure twelve outstanding films to be shown at that time. However, in the past two years it has been increasingly difficult to secure German films.

Admission has been by membership cards which could be secured during the season for groups of four meetings. The interest displayed by the modern language teachers was a great help, for they were furnished with criticisms of the film to be shown which they discussed with their students before each meeting. In some cases, the French and German instructors asked for written reports on the films instead of another assignment from their students.

The group has varied in size from three hundred to five hundred members and has always ended the year with enough in the bank to pay for printing the programs of the following year. These were usually sent out the first of October and during the season members were notified at least three days before the meetings by a post card, giving a brief description of the film to be shown. Very little was done with newspaper publicity though it was usually possible to insert a brief notice several days before a meeting.

No attempt was made to have formal discussions of the films shown, except that which took place in the classrooms. However, members usually stayed around the lobby after a film and discussed it among themselves.

We believe a large part of the League's success has been due to the fact that the films have been shown in a regular theatre by an experienced operator, with none of the drawbacks attendant in trying to use 16 mm versions with an inexperienced operator.

Mrs. Piercy Chestney

President, Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee

WE are doing the same thing that we have been doing for sixteen years. The delegate from Dallas said that she was a permanent director of her group, and it seems I am the permanent president of our group, having been so for sixteen years.

We are not continuing the regular children's matinees we used to have, but every other Saturday morning we are having matinees for which the pictures are selected by the motion picture appreciation groups in the high schools. We still have our Thanksgiving matinee, the admission being something to eat or to wear and the Toy matinee for Christmas is held the first Saturday in December. We have a matinee for the underprivileged children, for which the principals of the schools distribute tickets, printed by the management. The whole thing is free with all four of our theatres open, and around 6,000 children in attendance. We also have our regular Mothers' Matinee on Mothers' Day every year. This past year the oldest mother, the youngest mother and the mother with the largest number of children, all received prizes and their pictures were published in the paper.

There is not much new that we are doing. We have been broadcasting now for nine years. I compile the broadcast every week and it is read by a different member of the Broadcasting Committee. Two of them have done so well that they are now on the regular staff of the station. When the station eliminated all of the sustaining programs, by telling them they would charge them \$1.00 a minute, they kept us on and we still have fifteen minutes of time.

Probably the most interesting new thing I can tell you, since almost everyone seems to be talking of that picture, is that one of our group is acting as advisor for the production of *Gone With The Wind*.

Our Sue Merritt went out to Hollywood, and is having a glorious and interesting time. Some of her experience may be interesting to you. She spent some hours with Leslie Howard teaching him to talk Southern. She went one morning to select the neckties that Clark Gable is to wear as Rhett Butler.

None of us in the South has ever had any real interest in who was going to play Scarlett, because Scarlett is not essentially a Southern person. Vivian Leigh, Miss Merritt says, will make a charming Scarlett. She is beautiful, her voice is lovely and she is making every effort to be the role. Miss Merritt was very much interested in who was going to be Mammy and who was going to be Prissy, the young maid, and who was going to be Aunt Pit-a-Pat. Laura Hope Crews will be Aunt Pit-a-Pat, and she had a good many conversations with her. Many days were spent in looking over films of Negroes, trying to find somebody who would be right as Mammy. You here from the South know the Mammy and know she was loved by her white "chillens." You will not see this Mammy with a bandana handkerchief with rabbit ears sticking out, nor will you see her with a frilly apron.

She had seen the technicolor scenes taken after they had tried sprinkling brick dust over the soil to make it look like the red clay hills of Georgia. They were perfectly satisfactory and now tons of brick dust are being scattered over the place.

We were fearful that they were going to make Scarlett's home a Southern mansion with great columns and a grand stairway. It is a rambling frame building where anybody in very moderate circumstances like Scarlett's people would live.

Another fear was that they were going to have thousands of people at the barbecue. In those days if 75 people gathered together that would have been a crowd. Miss Merritt writes two columns a week for the home papers and a great many letters. She has said if *Gone With The Wind* is not satisfactory to Southern people it will not be the fault of the producers. They are making every effort that it is humanly possible to do it right.

Mrs. George C. Cleary

Elizabeth (N. J.) Council for Better Films

WE were organized six years ago. I feel after working with our Council for six years if I am not able to talk to you for five minutes and tell you something about what we are doing that we have not been very successful. We are composed of representatives from the different organizations in our town, each of the organizations sending us four delegates.

In the beginning we had a very difficult problem, because it was estimated that 59 per cent of our pictures were recommended and the other 41 per cent were not. The way we decide whether or not a picture is to be recommended by the Council is by having a contact committee which meets every two weeks and goes over the published lists of pictures issued by various groups, to which we subscribe. We do not make any attempt to have one, two or three members decide whether or not a picture should be recommended. We have many viewpoints and so we prefer to meet and decide from these group views.

We publish a list in our Friday night paper every week. The space is donated by the Elizabeth Daily Journal and all of the pictures that are recommended, with their ratings, are given. We rate them as excellent, very good, good and fair. No un-recommended picture is listed. We feel that it is not fair publicity to the manager or to the newspaper. The newspaper accepts the managers advertising and should not list un-recommended pictures. Also we do not believe in giving too much publicity to the not recommended pictures. Each month we issue a bulletin of all the good pictures. It goes to all who send us self-addressed and stamped envelopes—to the churches, the library, recreation centers and the playgrounds.

We are particularly anxious to bring before the public the question of the family pictures. We feel that there are two sides to this problem. We feel that the motion picture public have a very definite responsibility and that they should support good pictures. We feel that the managers have a very definite responsibility, too, that they should give us the kind of pictures the people

want. The only way they can do that is for us to tell them what kind we want.

We have two first-run theatres, we have three second-run theatres, and one theatre that plays third-run pictures. It takes pictures that are not shown in either of the other two houses. In the beginning the attitude of the managers was one of wondering just how we would function, whether or not we were going to interfere in their business or whether we were going to bring some very constructive thinking to this job. They tell us now that they believe we are going about it in the right way. They do not always agree with us any more than we always agree with them, but we are working together on a much better basis than when we started.

To keep ourselves informed of things that are going on in the motion picture business we have a discussion group that meets every two weeks. Topics are assigned and the people come prepared to discuss and to learn about the thing that we are so interested in.

We feel that we must have a background if we are going to do a good job. Then we have our regular meeting at which time we have a speaker. We have a news letter which is published once a month. This news letter tells about the good pictures and the news for the next month, who our speaker will be and the discussion groups for the month. Thus we keep our members informed so that they will be interested.

We have worked very closely with the school people. They have photoplay appreciation groups in the schools. In the beginning we furnished them with all of their study guides. Later, when the managers worked a little more closely with us they agreed to pay for these study guides, supplied to the schools. We notify the supervisor of English usually two weeks in advance. If we can find out earlier we let him know as soon as we know that a good picture is coming to town. Then special arrangements are made by the English or the history classes for the children to attend the pictures. Sometimes it is at a reduced rate, if the hours are so that the manager can take care of them. Usually there are from 500 to 1,000 children visiting these pictures.

Mrs. George E. Cox
President, Wilmington (Del.)
Better Films Council

OUR Council started ten years ago. Perhaps many of you who have been used to coming to these meetings may know Mrs. Edmund M. Barsham who formed the Council at that time. Out of that formation I feel that we have a very splendid organization. We are represented by the Clubs, the Federated Church groups and individual memberships.

We have a very happy situation in Wilmington in that our ten theatres cooperate beautifully with us. We have so few bones of contention that I hardly would know where to start in the complaint line.

We have one person who does the contacting with the exhibitors. In that way the exhibitor knows this one woman and she is much more capable of handling a situation than I or some other of the various members of the Council. We deal with the exhibitors as we do with our friends. We are careful and we are tactful. Any of us may take kindly to criticism if given in a nice way, but we all dislike very much the type of criticism in which people who know a little something about a particular activity feel that they are in a position to talk down to people who make their living in it. Therefore we try to handle any situation much as we would among friends. We are a town of 130,000 and the Warner chain have six theatres. There is a new one opening very shortly. Loews have one. The managers frequently invite us to a private showing.

The artist at Loews very kindly arranged the exhibition that I brought here. I think it speaks rather well for our Council that the manager was happy to make something which he thought I would be very proud to bring to New York and I really am.

We do not always have to show our hand in public about any objectionable picture which may be considered for showing, but just by a little discreet passing out of the word here and there we are able to accomplish a great many things.

A theatre that had been showing a poor type of pictures was taken over by a new exhibitor about ten months ago. He is doing a beautiful job of bringing fine pictures to

that house. We have had *Dark Rapture* and *Moonlight Sonata*. It goes to prove that, because a house has been the type where they have shown poor pictures in the past, it does not mean that an exhibitor cannot bring up his standard of pictures. The same thing has happened in another theatre, the oldest in town. I feel that we are just very fortunate in the type of pictures that we do get.

We have tried to work toward a motion picture appreciation study group with the public school system, but that has not gone through, however, in the private schools they are studying the motion picture as a supplement to their English and history courses.

Mrs. James A. Craig

Founder, Jacksonville (Fla.) Motion
Picture Council

I am always interested in the subject of motion pictures and the work there is in connection with it.

There were two things said this morning that gave me an idea of what to speak about. There was the lady who spoke of her difficulties in trying to pre-view and the gentlemen who took exception to the idea of one person rating a picture.

In Jacksonville for thirteen or fourteen years I have personally compiled the photoplay guide, not quite every week but almost every week in all of that time, for one and sometimes for both of the papers in Jacksonville. That guide has the heading, "Compiled by the Motion Picture Council of Jacksonville from information furnished by the National Motion Picture Council."

We use the exact wording that is used on the film lists which are sent out weekly by the National Board of Review. We do not mention the theatre or the date. It is simply a listing of the pictures for the following week. Everyone can read the theatre advertisements and find out which theatre is showing which film. We list the audience suitability that is given by the National Board in connection with each picture, and, of course, list only those pictures which are included in the selected lists of the Board.

In that way we feel that we are giving the public a service that is fair. It does not implicate us if they do not happen to like it. Of course, we do not agree among ourselves.

Frequently I disagree with the National Board's ideas, but we feel that their Committees have sufficient representation of a cross section of the public to give a pretty fair guide to people.

Some of my friends have told me of sitting in a bus and hearing some girls behind them discussing pictures. One of them pulled out a list and said, "Here is a picture I want to see. This is what it says about it."

The comments by the National Board give a sufficient idea of the picture to let you know whether you are interested in that type or not. Some people like nothing but comedies and some only serious pictures. These lists give a clear idea, yet without giving the entire story, so they do not spoil your enjoyment of the picture.

Mrs. Clarence Echols

Director, The Motion Picture Council for
Dallas (Texas)

WE have two Motion Picture Councils in the State of Texas, in Dallas and in San Antonio. I had the pleasure of organizing both of these Councils and I am the permanent director of the one in Dallas, which is just two years old.

Our Council meets once a month. We have a membership of about 50, it could be 250, but there is a reason for that as we believe that sometimes better work can be done by smaller groups.

We have a study course. We had talked so much about educating the parents so that they could select the pictures for their children to see, that we came to the conclusion that we needed to be educated about motion pictures if we were going to try to educate the parents.

After hours of work the study course was prepared. It is very simple but very interesting. I say that because I think that most every family in Dallas has had copies. It became as popular as *Gone With The Wind*. To be read it must be interesting.

We are informing all of Dallas as to what we are doing. We have representatives from all of the clubs, the Federated Clubs, the Women's Forum, the Dallas City Council, the Parent-Teachers Association, the Sunshine Club, all of them are represented in our group. Each month they are privi-

leged to invite about ten guests. So we do have crowds.

We go directly through correspondence to the producer, whenever we have complaints. We tell him about his pictures. If we like his pictures we praise them very much, and we will go to any extent to help put on the good pictures and to advertise them.

The Council previews all of the pictures and keeps a record. The telephone rings constantly about this and that picture. We classify them for family, adult and young people. These classifications appear in the Saturday morning and in the Sunday newspapers. That provides word of them right in the beginning, as our shows are changed on Saturdays, and thus the mothers know where their children should go. The Council and their guests attend each month the best show in town.

Last year, as I told you, we had a study course. This year we have changed a little and are having a lecture each month. The first lecture was by one of our leading newspaper critics on the subject, "The Essentials of a Good Motion Picture." We have followed that right on through.

So that our study course will not be forgotten, occasionally a list of questions is prepared which makes it necessary to go back through the study papers of the last year in order to answer them.

Mrs. F. B. Frear
President, Rutherford (N. J.)
Inter-Club Council

THE Rutherford Better Films Committee was organized in 1924. We were very active from the beginning and we went after all of those ideals of which we think so much. We are now known as the Inter-Club Council.

We have put motion picture appreciation into the schools as part of the English course. The junior motion picture appreciation groups of the Committee eventually became the High School Motion Picture Clubs, which the young people can join after they have had sophomore English and motion picture appreciation. These clubs are so popular that they have trouble limiting membership. In doing this we achieved one of our original aims.

We have the Photoplay Guide in the newspaper and in the library. We have library service, with the library cooperating in various ways, such as a special shelf of books from which films are made.

Our motion picture theatre has 98 per cent selected pictures, with a high average of family week-end pictures. We have had in the theatre special Saturday junior matinees but finally gave those up, because the parents of our town decided that they knew what was best for their children and sent them to the usual matinee on Saturday afternoon, feeling the family week-end program was good enough. The manager of the theatre has always been cooperative. The tradition in that theatre is that the Rutherford people are fussy and will not take anything. Therefore, our programs are of a much higher type than those in some theatres near us.

Cards are sent out for exceptional films when they come to town. We have a mailing list of about 250. If a real need comes for an active study group we are there, but we feel that a study group is not necessary in our community today.

Mrs. George Holderer
Scarsdale (N. Y.) Motion Picture Council

OUR situation is a little bit difficult because of the close proximity to White Plains and New York City. People go to see the pictures at the first-run houses there and say to us, "Why do we have to wait so long to see the picture in Scarsdale?" Of course, that gives our theatre manager a problem.

We started out as a Council by having representatives from all of the various organizations that were interested in children. From those representatives quite a number of us had been selected to do reviewing with the National Board of Review and with other preview organizations. We meet at regular monthly intervals and make out a list of films which at least one of us has seen and send that list to our schools.

Some of the schools consider this of sufficient value so that it is mimeographed and sent out to each home represented in the school. These pictures we are quite sure from the general consensus of the previewing organizations are ones that are of

definite worth. We provide also a column for our local newspaper which carries a brief résumé and evaluation of the pictures to be shown the following week.

Another difficulty we have found in our community is to get the children to go to the pictures which are shown at the children's matinee. We tried for a long time to have an early matinee, with a break in the program following it. But would the children go home? No, indeed, they saw their picture and then stayed through the others. That has been given up and the management shows a western with appropriate shorts for the children Saturday afternoon early and then the regular film is shown. The children go in at one-thirty and come out at a quarter of six. There does not seem to be much that we can do about it. The real trouble is that the parents are not sufficiently interested to insist that the children come out of the theatre when the children's program is over. I am very much afraid that they feel it is a very convenient nursery.

We are hoping by very careful absence from the theatre on the part of the people of Scarsdale we can stop Bank Night. It started out with a bang. They had it every Monday night with poor features, hoping that Bank Night would be the bait that would drag the people in.

So far we have been able to do little in the way of any motion picture appreciation work in our schools. Our superintendent and Board of Education are very conservative and they still seem to feel that it is some woman's notion. We are trying by showing them what other people are doing, to convince them that the idea is not ours alone but one that is of very wide importance. We are working along slowly and carefully, hoping that we will eventually get from our schools the kind of cooperation we need.

Mrs. Harold E. Kerwin
Chairman, Better Films Council
New Bedford (Mass.)

OUR Council is five years old. We have representatives from forty-two of the organizations in our community and the surrounding towns. We started off by doing all

of the things we were supposed to do, we had the bi-monthly discussions and all that sort of thing. We kept going along very well. Today I have heard so many fine ideas proposed here that we will keep going in a much finer way than we have the last year.

Our main idea was to put the ratings in the paper for the mothers to see and judge for themselves what picture they wanted their children to attend, and to make the people motion picture minded. We use the prepared ratings. We have to get them in the Wednesday morning paper as one theatre program changes on Wednesday, one on Thursday and one on Friday. We were rather surprised to find that those using our ratings most were members of the college club. They could not do without them, they told us. Our papers have been splendidly cooperative and have given us all of the publicity we want.

Our managers are rather pleasant. There is, however, a sort of tepid feeling, they do not seem to dislike us, but they just don't like us either. They do deserve credit because they started the Saturday morning children's matinees when they had particularly fine children's pictures. When they do it we applaud vigorously. We think that encourages them. Also, when some of the finer pictures, like *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet* came to town they called on us to help them. We thought that a nice gesture. The College Club made quite a social event of these and also made quite a little money for the Club.

We send all of the vacation dates in New Bedford and surrounding towns to our managers so they can prepare better programs for vacations when the children are free. They had said many times, "If we had only known." So we do not let them have that excuse any more.

I do not believe that we have done many outstanding things. I think we are like most of the New Englanders, rather conventional. We sort of work along usual lines and keep going. Someone told us that we are an army in reserve, if we are needed we are there to be called on and are ready to go to work. Perhaps that is just what we are.

Dr. James S. Kinder, Professor of Visual Education, Pennsylvania College for Women, Pittsburgh

THIS is the first of your fifteen conferences which I have had the privilege of attending and I have enjoyed it very much. If the programs of today and tomorrow are anything like those of yesterday, I shall be more than delighted to have been here. This conference is exceedingly interesting and the work that you are doing is of tremendous value.

I am Professor of Visual Education and Director of a Film Library in a private college, which leads me to say that I am chiefly interested in instructional films. Of course, I am also interested in the entertainment film because I realize that the two cannot be separated entirely. Instructional films should be entertaining—they should be interesting to boys and girls—and I think the entertainment film will, in most cases, perhaps in all cases, be instructional. In fact I can scarcely imagine any film which does not have some instructional value, be it good or bad.

Mrs. Cuthbert, Chairman of the Pittsburgh Council, should be here to report on the work of her organization. I have met with that organization on a few occasions and it is doing an excellent piece of work. The members of this organization have been working closely with the P.-T.A. and the principals of the schools, and have sponsored better movies for children. Quite reasonable results have been accomplished in at least four sections of the city.

My own work is more with teachers, that is the teaching of teachers. A good deal can be done in the matter of informing teachers in advance of what they can do with children's movie appetites before they get out into the schools.

You may be interested to know that the Pennsylvania College for Women sponsored a visual education conference last year for the teachers of our service area. The conference was so well received that we are repeating it this year. The Pittsburgh Public Schools, through the Director of Visualization, Dr. John Hollinger, have assisted us in planning these conferences. This year the conference will be held on March 31 and April 1. The emphasis will be on using all

types of visual teaching aids in the classroom. Several teachers from the Pittsburgh and surrounding schools will take part on the program. For example, there will be talks and demonstrations on using these aids in the teaching of elementary science, character, English, etc. One very interesting aspect of the program will be to show the use of school-produced moving pictures to stimulate the P.-T.A. Miss Louise Milligan, assistant supervising principal of the Forest Hills Borough Schools will discuss this subject and use a film which she produced in her school. Three out-of-town speakers will appear on the program; Dr. Howard Gray, Director of Field Studies of Erpi Classroom Films, Mr. Arch A. Mercey, Assistant Director of the United States Film Service, and Dr. William Gregory, Director of the Educational Museum of Cleveland. We are expecting an attendance of about three hundred. The proceedings of the conference will be mimeographed and sent to interested parties at the small cost of fifteen cents to pay for paper and mailing.

Mrs. William J. Massa

**Vice President, Staten Island (N. Y.)
Better Film Council**

THE Staten Island Better Film Council was organized under the auspices of the Richmond County Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Federation of Women's Clubs. It has in its membership many of the civic organizations on the Island, which are giving us more and more support, as our aims are more widely understood. The Council President is Richmond Motion Picture Chairman in the Federation of Women's Clubs and she has been glad to confer with the State and City Chairmen of the Federation.

We have won the cooperation of the local press and, best of all, the good will and assistance of the theatre managers.

The outstanding feature of our work is the publication of the Staten Island Motion Picture Guide, twice a month, in which is listed, two weeks in advance, all the pictures which are to be shown at our fourteen motion picture houses. These pictures are rated for audience suitability—adults 18 years up, young people 15 to 18 years, fam-

ily under 18 years. Fifty pictures are about the minimum on the list.

The Guide is placed in the schools, public libraries, parish houses, and is sent to organizations and individuals who are members. Our papers publish our list and even our condemnations. The libraries have set aside shelves for books, pamphlets and announcements of the motion pictures, and a bulletin board on which stills are displayed. As the pictures move to the different houses, the stills and data are sent to the library nearest the theatre in which the picture is to be shown. The producers are most generous in sending us the stills. These are for the outstanding pictures and generally relate to the books on the library shelves. This is arousing the interest of the young people and increasing demand for the books.

The High School English classes are forming motion picture clubs and previewing pictures through the courtesy of the National Board of Review. The teachers come to us for advice and we are more than glad to be helpful.

When public criticism is made of our work we try to answer through the press explaining the whys and wherefores of what we have done. We are always glad of criticism for we feel this work belongs to the public. The horse race at one of the theatres was criticised by the Federation of Mothers' Clubs, as they felt it was teaching the children to gamble. At the suggestion of the Council, the manager immediately eliminated this. Of course, our aim is to back the good pictures and publicize them so that they will be a paying proposition; this is all the managers want, as it is their living and the box-office receipts tell the story.

We have had three open meetings this year. Mr. Hal Hode, a Columbia Pictures Executive, was one of the speakers, giving us a résumé of the picture *The Lost Horizon*. He was so impressed with the sincerity and interest of the audience that he sent *The Lost Horizon* books to the libraries. Other speakers were Mrs. Bettina Gunczy of the National Board of Review and Mrs. Ruth Byrne, who directs the motion picture study work at the Tilden High School in Brooklyn, and Mr. Louis Moses, one of our independ-

ent theatre owners. The Council pays for its work through its membership.

Without the cooperation of the press and theatre managers our work would be much more difficult. We feel that the standard of pictures shown has been raised and that the work has proven worthwhile in the Borough of Richmond.

Mrs. B. L. Meek

President, Knoxville (Tenn.) Motion
Picture Council

THE outstanding accomplishments this year of the Knoxville Motion Picture Council, have been the sponsorship of National Book Week activities, the publication of a weekly Movie Guide, a study department in connection with our monthly meetings, library contact and school contact.

During Book Week we placed posters in all schools, theatres, department and music stores, libraries, the Y.W.C.A. and the Y.M.C.A. Our city librarian, arranged an attractive corner for us, with books and pamphlets pertaining to motion pictures, and the files of our weekly movie guide, which we started July 4th of this past year. This corner was so enthusiastically received that it is now a permanent feature. Our Council has recently presented to the corner a subscription to the National Board of Review Magazine. Persons unable to come to the library may telephone for information on current films.

Our theatre manager gave the library and the Council an attractive "flash" at his largest theatre, in cooperation with Book Week. He also gave cash and a liberal number of passes for prizes in an essay contest, sponsored by the Council in the junior and senior schools.

In addition to the essay we conducted a survey in the public schools in regard to what books or stories the students would like to see filmed. Dr. Clark, Superintendent of our city schools, was so pleased with the essay and survey that he personally presented them both to all junior and senior high school pupils. The Book Week program was received with so much enthusiasm by the English teachers and pupils that we plan to make it an annual event.

At the beginning of this year we organized

a study department devoted to studying various activities concerning motion pictures. We try to have an inspirational speaker and an educational speaker at each meeting. We have two representatives from the Parents and Teachers Association, D.A.R., U.D.C., Pen Women, Catholic organizations, Business and Professional Women's Club, Girl Scouts, Library, A.A.U.W., Junior League, Junior Hadassah, Music Clubs, and Church Auxiliary.

We are working right along with our policewoman, Mrs. Allen, in cleaning up obscene entertainment in our theatres. We only have one house to watch now. We are given the privilege by the theatre manager to cut as much from both stage and screen as we see fit, and we check to make sure this is done. We found the advertisement in the newspapers to be worse than the pictures themselves. However, the newspapers are now cooperating by not running any advertisement on a picture of this type without either Mrs. Allen's or our Council's endorsement.

Knoxville, as you probably know, stands third in Visual Education. I would like to speak briefly about the special motion picture activity which is called "The Knoxville Project" by the Secondary Schools division of the N.E.A.

On the first Saturday of each month the junior and senior English students are privileged to attend special screening of some of the finer motion pictures of the past four years. Tickets are sold for only ten cents in the school on the Friday preceding each showing. Every one who purchases a ticket also receives a study guide especially prepared for each picture. Teachers do not give any special test on the pictures; we want the students to enjoy them for what they are, adaptations of great pieces of literature or famous stories from history. There is only one screening of each picture. Mr. Street, local theatre manager, is owed a great debt of gratitude from us for his whole-hearted cooperation in making this project a success.

In addition to this school activity, the faculty of our largest junior high school is privileged to ask for a special showing of any educational short, which is being shown

in any of the six chain theatres. These shorts are brought to a theatre within a very short walking distance of the school, where certain classes come to see them free of charge. All our schools have 16mm projectors and films.

All our better theatres have hearing devices for the deaf.

We have had some very encouraging and appreciative articles in the newspapers, and have received many letters on our efforts and accomplishments.

Mrs. Charles T. Owens
President, Philadelphia (Pa.)
Motion Picture Forum

IT is again a pleasure to be in attendance at the National Board of Review Annual Conference and to be able to renew old acquaintances and to make new ones. As well as to gain a never-failing inspiration.

You will notice that we have a small exhibit here. It shows our main projects. Our regular monthly Forum meetings are growing in interest and helpfulness.

We would like particularly to call your attention to the following achievements for this year: Our Welfare Committee has been doing some very fine work. Their activities included the Christmas canned goods show, and the matinee at which cheer was provided for at least 2000. The food collected was given to the charities that were most in need of it. There was the toy matinee in Pottstown at which toys of all kinds were collected, then repaired and afterwards given where they could do the most good. And there was the Shriner's Circus to which about 100 children were taken by our Welfare Chairman. We also have sponsored matinees for underprivileged mothers.

We have special study class programs. The eleven o'clock class sees a current foreign film as the guests of the Studio Theatre. Then there is the one-thirty class which has a discussion of that film and others of current interest as well as news items, under the capable direction of the leader, our Mrs. Cupitt. At two-thirty there are study lectures, one by Dr. John E. Dugan of Princeton, N. J. High School, another by Dr. Arthur Cleveland, of Temple

University. We have book reviews on the subject of motion pictures.

Another Forum activity is stressing the installation of devices to assist the hard of hearing. There are six theatres in the Philadelphia area that now have these devices.

Our Forum publication "Guide to Entertainment" has a distribution of about 5,000 monthly. We have a scrap book, which we find a very worthwhile project.

Also we sponsor as a special thing such films as *The Citadel*, *Of Human Hearts*, *Grand Illusion*, *The Christmas Carol*, *Idiot's Delight*, and *Pygmalion*. We mentioned *Christmas Carol* on a broadcast and sent out letters and post cards on almost all of the others giving them special mention.

We have organized several worthwhile groups and joined several others in order to increase our contacts and influence. We work in cooperation with the State Board of Education and the N. E. A., Department of Secondary Education, Committee on Motion Pictures, Pennsylvania Regional Director. We have been included in all worthwhile events, such as the Constitution Celebration in Pennsylvania.

We have two large luncheons during the year, at which we try to have nationally known speakers and guests. Before the luncheons we are guests at our best theatre. We make quite an event of each of these functions. A young women's speaker's bureau has been started and we find that we are having many requests from different organizations for this type of service.

Various Committees have been formed to direct different activities. We have a splendid Hostess Committee, for we find that it helps a lot in the spirit of the meeting to have the members greeted cordially at the door. The Program Committee is under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Raymond R. Bear, who is Chairman of the D. A. R. State Motion Picture Committee. We have a Distribution Committee and a Contact Committee, which contacts all of the new organizations in order to interest them in joining us. We have a Committee that comes over to New York frequently to meet with the National Board and bring back to us inspiration.

**Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, Jr.
Schools Motion Picture Committee
New York City**

I will try to tell you how the Schools Motion Picture Committee started and what it is doing.

About three years ago Mrs. Alonzo Klaw who is now Chairman of the Committee, and I were very anxious to do something about better pictures for children. I had been running, with the help of many other women, a picture house for little children. The question was asked, Why can't we do something about the older children?

We went to an independent house in New York, a small house and we said, "When you have a good feature picture if the rest of your program is not good will you at our suggestion change your short, and will you change something in your news that we do not like?" To our surprise he said, "Yes, I will try." We said, "If the whole program is good we will give you publicity in the schools and in the newspapers, as much as we can get."

We went to two other houses that year and they said they would do the same thing. We had three houses working with us and perhaps about fifteen schools. Whenever the whole program was good at each of these houses we sent the news to the schools, and said, "These are the picture houses where there is a full program which is good."

Well, it grew from that. The next year we had more theatres. Up to this year we have 300 theatres working with us in New York and about 100 schools. That means that there is a choice of good programs in perhaps 25 or 30 picture houses every week. The New York papers print these lists of pictures for the week-end.

The idea is that there is a good feature picture, with the rest of the program good too. That is what we try to emphasize. It isn't just one picture but the whole program that is good. We recommend it only up to fourteen years old—or rather, from fourteen years down, perhaps we had better say. After young people are fourteen they will go to see anything anyway, we feel.

To the many schools working with us we send our recommended lists and they put them on the Bulletin Board, and the parents can read the lists in the papers. We have

had many people write to us and many say, "We couldn't do without these."

We have had extraordinary cooperation from the independents. It has taken months for them to realize that we are not trying to get something out of it. We now have cooperation. When there is a picture that we do not like we do not do anything about it. There is no negative propaganda at all. It is all constructive.

The way we secure information for our activity is that we have a group of about forty who review with the National Board of Review. If it were not for their cooperation we would not be able to go on at all. A list of all the pictures that are approved is made. The theatres write in or we call up every week to find out what their programs are to be. Three people work out from these programs the lists which the papers get every Tuesday for publication before the week-end.

Mrs. Fred B. Ross
Motion Picture Chairman,
Bergen County (N. J.) P.-T.A.

I am very much afraid I am going to make you very envious. Our Teaneck Theatre, in Teaneck, N. J. is running a single feature program and on every Monday night we are having an exceptional picture. Among those that we have had are *Moonlight Sonata*, *Life and Loves of Beethoven*, in French, and among those to come are *Grand Illusion* and *Ballerina*.

We are very fortunate in having a Skouras theatre to work with. We have found—at least I have found in my chairmanship for the last seven or eight years—that Mr. Skouras is striving for the very finest in motion pictures and he has been most cooperative, anything that we have asked for he has very readily given to us. It is through him that this project has been made possible.

Our local manager has really done outstanding work. He spends sometimes two or three hours going through shorts. Of course, with a single feature program we have to have shorts. He has had the Fitzpatrick series of travelogues and the *Unfinished Symphony* and *Tannhauser* and many other exceptionally fine shorts. People

often tell others that they would not miss the shorts which he shows.

During the Monday evening special programs, between the first and second showing coffee and crackers are served at the back of the theatre. All of you who belong to clubs know what refreshments mean. But this does make for a friendly atmosphere, especially enjoyed by the teachers who come together here. We have made this a county project and not just a local undertaking. Many of the teachers who meet occasionally at their conventions, now have this weekly coming together. They stand around before and between showings discussing their different school problems. The organizations cooperating are our Bergen County Parent-Teacher Association and the Hackensack and Teaneck Women's Clubs.

This friendly atmosphere is not confined to the special Monday night program. During the entire week we have a very attractive lounge upstairs where demi tasse and crackers are served, and there are magazines for anyone to read. I have found as I have been there many times that there are a number of young men, evidently working boys in their early twenties, who go up there early and sit around and read the magazines and smoke. Cigarettes are offered free of charge, too. It is a fine place for these young men. They meet and enjoy themselves. We really feel that we are doing an important work for them too.

In Bergen County it is compulsory for the French students during the year to come in to New York City to see French pictures. Now we have special rates for them when we have the French pictures. The teacher initials the tickets that are distributed, and then the students are given the reduced rate. This eliminates a trip to New York, an expense which a number of them cannot afford. It also relieves the teacher of the anxiety of bringing a group to New York. We have a special matinee for these French students at four o'clock and we have found that the auditorium is practically filled.

We have heard the demand for single feature programs for the last several years. Now since we have been running them for three months we have had to telephone people and tell them about it in other ways.

We have contacted personally every principal throughout Bergen County and they are helping us for they in turn contact their teachers. It has been a constant and hard pull but we are at last realizing the fruits of our efforts and that people do appreciate the single feature, especially if these are exceptional pictures.

Mr. Vernon Sanders
Vice Chairman, Bronxville (N. Y.)
Motion Picture Council

THE history of our Council goes back to that point where, for years, a Film Committee of the Women's Club of Bronxville had been previewing films and trying to cooperate with the theatre manager. Usually the attitude was that here was a group of nosey women with too much time on their hands. To overcome that, about five years ago a move was started in which around 120 of the citizens of the town, many of them men, were asked if they would work with such a Council. Some 100 signed up and said they would give time and money to help further the study of the motion picture problem.

The Council was then organized. It does its business through an Executive Committee representing the service organizations of the village. On that Executive Committee there are about as many men as women. So far we have practically always had a man for Chairman.

The Council has a very happy situation. It is a one-theatre town. That theatre being one of the Skouras chain, and you have heard that they are cooperative. However, we still have plenty of dragons to kill. We started out the first year simply to make the parents and people of the village aware that there was a motion picture problem. We did this through newspaper publicity. The second year we worked a little more on getting better conditions in the theatre, such as safety, and on motion picture appreciation.

The next year we "went to town" on the children's matinee. We are still going and have not reached town as yet. We submitted to the parents of the village, some 804 of them—that is 804 homes—a questionnaire asking them just what they wanted for a children's matinee. A morning matinee had been tried without much success, also an

afternoon show at which the children stayed three or four hours, and that was not good. So we devised a questionnaire asking the parents some twenty questions about what they wanted for the children on Saturday afternoon. We published the results in pamphlet form "Movie Programs for Bronxville Children—What 748 Parents Think." We took these answers to the manager and said, "What are you going to do about it?" He said, "We will cooperate if you will help us."

We put into effect an afternoon program which would be not over two hours in length, a single feature with suitable shorts. Often the week-end picture was suitable, because the manager had tried to get family pictures, so we did not have to use another film. If the picture was not suitable he would put in a picture which the Council recommended. There would be a break in the program after the children's show and before the Saturday continuous show, as long as a half hour. That was fairly successful. About 75 or 80 per cent of the children did get up and go out. It is our experience that a 15-minute break will be as valuable as a half hour and will not cause disgruntled adults. Children sit in the orchestra only. There are no trailers and the price is reduced.

The show has not been entirely successful for several reasons. In the first place, it was misnamed. It was called a children's show. At once the older children boycotted it. It came a little too early at first and the families could not meet the schedule. That has been rectified since. The manager is very much committed to a week-end family picture and that is what we are trying to get.

We have started to help in selecting the shorts. Sometimes they are suitable and sometimes not. Now we are checking every Saturday afternoon show with a check sheet.

Another problem is that as soon as the Motion Picture Council had been organized and started to function the parents said, "That problem is all settled. We haven't anything else to do." I imagine you have found the same thing. What we have to do is to get the parents to believe and to act on the fact that it is their job, too.

Last year we asked the parents, this year we are going to ask the children. We have prepared and are ready to submit in the local

schools, from the fourth grade to the twelfth, a simple questionnaire asking the children just what they want on Saturday afternoon. Many of the children are pretty serious about it and from this we can at least get their cooperation, when they know that we are asking them what they would like.

Mrs. Charles W. Swift
President, Motion Picture Council of
Elmira, N. Y.

WE are a small city of 50,000 so perhaps we can do some things that the larger cities cannot, we can reach our people without sending out lists.

This is the fourth year of our Elmira Motion Picture Council. It has a membership of 45 organizations: clubs, civic, religious and educational groups. We meet once a month for a business meeting, for discussion and for information which each Chairman takes back to her particular group.

We have a very enthusiastic group to work with. Ten new organizations joined us this year. We have concentrated on three main objectives. First, making the people of our city more motion picture conscious. Second, interesting the young people in the study of motion pictures. Third, making the influence of our Council felt in the community.

At our April meeting of last year we observed Motion Picture Week, as had been discussed here at the Conference. The newspapers and the Association of Commerce Magazine gave us very fine writeups to start it off. The merchants cooperated, showing stills from the motion pictures, in the department stores, dress shops and men's stores. One store showed exhibits of cameras, projectors and other photographic equipment. The music stores displayed music taken from motion pictures. Book stores and libraries exhibited books that were used for pictures. Clubs and organizations showed stills and the research exhibits sent out by the motion picture distributors. As it was Easter Week vacation for the schools and for Elmira College they could do little except to announce the program the week before.

We felt that this reached a great many people and it seemed to make them more conscious of the influence of the motion pic-

ture, of its educational, as well as entertainment value.

National Book Week was also observed with posters and exhibits in the schools and the college and in the libraries and book stores.

We belong to and cooperate with the Children's Theatre Council in bringing outstanding entertainment for children to the city. We had a program of four entertainments this year.

Once a year we bring an exceptional photoplay to our community, something we would otherwise not see. We sell tickets in order to earn money to carry on the work of the Council. Last year we brought *Mayerling*. This year it was *Moonlight Sonata*, with a balanced program of fine shorts. It played to packed houses for three days and the general comment was, "Why can't we have more of this type of picture?" We received some good newspaper advertising and some nice writeups. Our three newspapers are all owned by one organization. The theatres can never get any advertising for which they do not pay. Therefore, it was quite wonderful to think we had several columns with no charge whatever, devoted to the film that we had brought to Elmira. It helped us a great deal and we felt that we had accomplished something in getting this writeup. We had circulars printed which we distributed to the Thursday Morning Musical and the University Club. This reached the people who would enjoy a picture like *Moonlight Sonata*. The publicity spread out to the surrounding towns, which were all represented at the showing of the picture. We earned over \$100. for our Council work.

We have a Photoplay Club among the high schools, which meets every Friday morning at a quarter of eight. A very enthusiastic group started this Club and they preview pictures quite often and discuss them. Another high school is ready to have one formed. The teachers and principals are interested in beginning photoplay appreciation in the high schools. We are doing everything possible to get that started this spring so that by fall we will have it in many of the English classes.

We are included in all the community projects, so that we feel that we are really being

recognized as doing something constructive in the community. We are looking forward to more accomplishments in another year.

**Miss Beatrice R. Tripp,
President, Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films
Council**

IN the Rochester schools we have a regular required course in motion picture appreciation in the second semester of the third year's work. It is written into the regular English schedule.

We have organized a study group in the Council. It is under the direction of Mrs. Belinson, a member of the Council and manager of our Little Theatre. There are about 25 members of that group, which I think is good considering that our total membership is only about 150.

Just to be a little different, I am going to tell you about a failure that we have had. You have been talking about the successes. We have had our failures.

For some years we have had, in the Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester's leading newspaper, a list of the current pictures with their ratings, which we took largely from the National Board of Review ratings. The theatre exhibitors objected, so we had to discontinue it.

Mr. George David, the motion picture reviewer on the paper has given us something of a substitute. He rates the pictures as family or adult, and gives to the Motion Picture Council the credit for those ratings. That is all we have in the paper. We did not feel that this was enough, so we organized a bureau which people might call on the telephone to get more detailed ratings of the current pictures. That was going along pretty well, but a difficulty was that we did not always get the ratings in time to answer requests that came in on the opening day of a picture. So we conceived the idea of having a member of our Council attend the first showing of the picture in each downtown theatre each week, going in about eleven o'clock when the theatre opened, and after the completion of the program telephoning her rating to the Bureau so that for the rest of the day we would have something to give to those people who telephoned.

I wrote letters to the two managers of the

downtown theatres asking if they would admit one of our members at that time. The representative of the Loew interests in Rochester was most enthusiastic about it. He said he thought it would be of mutual benefit. Our representatives began to go to the theatre. We had two, a man and a woman, who went on alternate weeks.

The other manager, controlling three theatres, did not reply to my letter. I waited three weeks and then wrote to him again. His reply then was that he could see nothing in such a project and would be obliged to refuse. He did ask me to call on him and I did that, thinking that perhaps he would weaken, but he did not. He said he felt that altogether too many people and too many organizations were criticizing motion pictures and that he did not see any reason why we should be rating pictures.

Then he cited this instance; suppose a mother intends to go to the theatre in the afternoon and take her child with her. She will call up our Mrs. Mayer, and perhaps be told that the Council has rated the picture for adults only, that it is not a family picture. Then she will not be able to take her child and she probably will not go herself. He said, "I would lose two admissions."

I am very sorry because I know that we were giving a real service to many parents in Rochester, and I felt that as the news spread more people would be using it. That is something that we shall have to work on.

**Mrs. A. S. Tucker
Advisory Vice-President,
Louisiana Council for Motion Pictures**

I want to say it is a very great privilege to be here to attend a Conference that is devoted entirely to motion pictures, and to come in contact with community leaders who have the same purpose and objective in doing this work. I have traveled 1100 miles on the train, two nights and a day, to be here.

We were organized first as the New Orleans Better Films Committee in 1932. Feeling that a Better Films Committee was not quite broad enough for the scope of motion picture work, the following year we changed our name to the Louisiana Council

for Motion Pictures, and set as our main purpose and objective the development of motion picture appreciation in the schools as a part of the regular curriculum.

We now have forty organizations affiliated with our Council, and over 100 members at large. Our membership is composed of cultural and study clubs, Parent-Teacher groups, mothers' clubs, parents' clubs, school groups, Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., the Orleans Council of Jewish Women; in fact, I think we have a very fair representation throughout the club area of Louisiana.

We are extending our work now as rapidly as we can, because expansion comes with the development of study programs.

We have used Dr. Lewin's monograph on motion picture appreciation in high schools as a text book to give to teachers and principals and we have used Dr. Dale's book. We have used the National Board of Review Magazine. At our monthly meetings in presenting various articles to the schools we have encouraged the clubs to use the wonderfully informative specialized articles on various phases of the motion pictures as a part of their club programs.

One of our first achievements was to contact the State Superintendent of Education in Baton Rouge, to have him look over the program of work and to ask his endorsement, which after a month's time he gave. He endorsed it to such an extent that he sent a circular letter to every superintendent throughout every parish in the State of Louisiana.

We approached the superintendent of the Parish schools. He gave us a letter of entrée into all the schools in New Orleans, to work with the teachers where they were willing. We have never forced ourselves into the schools. We have always tried to develop so much material and so many good things to show them that they would be enthusiastic about the program and would want to go ahead and organize it.

The Normal School started working with us when we were organized. At first it was extracurricular. Last February, a year ago, they found a place in their regular course of study for it. This is very important because these girls are our future teachers.

The Department of Superintendents of the N.E.A. met in New Orleans in February

1936, with about 10,000 educators there. We were fortunate in being able to have a joint conference with the Department of Secondary Education and to bring Dr. Lewin to New Orleans. We had such fine cooperation for that meeting. RKO sent down a print of the *March of Time*, showing Dr. John Dewey demonstrating progressive education among young children.

We are happy to say that an outstanding educator, who is a member of our Council, was selected as Regional Director. He has spent a great deal of time in organizing the work and has included several members of the Council on his advisory committee.

I feel that the one thing that a conference such as this can do is to bring a unified program among all groups. We all do certain things, but it seems to me if we would stress, as a group, the need and the want for motion picture appreciation in the schools, then the State Departments of Education and the N.E.A. will find places in the regular course of study for it on a par with literature, music, drawing, and the other arts.

This year a school survey is being taken in New Orleans of the Orleans parish schools, that is, the public schools, with the idea of improving the curriculum. The Council was interested and through the Committee of Educators there is to be submitted a motion picture study. Besides creating study classes in the schools the Council is also encouraging and carrying along with that program the use of the motion picture projects and educational films as part of the teaching equipment in the schools. Where there is no money for the school to buy it we are encouraging the Parent-Teacher groups of the schools to purchase it. Orleans Parish is compiling a film library. The Louisiana State University has an outstanding one, and the schools can get the films for the price of transportation.

We have a Drama Chairman, who was formerly a Little Theatre member. She has a round table at our monthly meetings on current pictures and everybody takes part in it. Also incorporated in the monthly programs are the reviews, oral and written, from the pupils of the various schools working with us.

We have had very fine contact with the

theatres and they have been most cooperative in furnishing us with study charts and study guides and various materials that would help the community program.

Twice a year the Council has an open meeting. At this open meeting we present a review of a very fine film or of a book that is made into a film. These open meetings are usually attended by anywhere from two to three hundred people. We have 18 affiliated neighborhood picture houses. We have about 14 independents. We have five first-run downtown theatres and we have one or two first-run downtown independents, who show the outstanding foreign films that the regular large theatres do not show. We have not published lists because we use the National Board of Review lists, and other published lists that are placed in the public libraries, in the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A., in some of the high schools and other strategic points.

Dr. Francis D. Tyson

Department of Economics, The University of Pittsburgh

WHEN I listened to these splendid reports of constructive achievement by you women leaders through the country, it seemed to me that we academic people, should be put to shame. For years some of us, Dr. Frederic Thrasher, Dr. Frank Astor, and many others have been interested in extending the work of the National Board, so that a trained Field Secretary might be available for your service to standardize and pool the best experience of the country.

I am reminded of an old aphorism of Bernard Shaw's, "He who can, does; he who can't, teaches."

I had hoped that there was going to be time for our Chairman, Dr. Pettit, who is one of the few real experts on community organization in the United States, to comment in summary after this interesting discussion, on some problems of theory and practice in the organization of Motion Picture Councils.

There is no doubt that, as perhaps, the Rochester experience given today indicates, the organization of an effective and continually operative Council in a large city is difficult. I must report that to date Pittsburgh's effort has been relatively a failure. We have had several attempts since Prof.

Leroy Bowman and Mr. Barrett came to Pittsburgh about 1930, just before the unfortunate depression. We had all the groups together and planned a Council. But there was no responsible executive and the project did not materialize.

Allowing for the good work of the Federation of Clubs and the D.A.R., and of the Parent-Teacher Councils and the Pittsburgh school system and local school principals—all of whom deserve great credit—I think we all agree now that there should be a general coordination of all motion picture community activities, to work with the trade and to attempt the education and guidance of the audience.

Three years ago, some of you will remember, Miss Isabel P. Kennedy, the Executive Director of our Federation of Social Agencies of Allegheny County, presided at a session similar to this. We hoped then in Pittsburgh that we were to go through with a city-wide setup. At the last moment when we were going to add the organization of Motion Picture Council work to the group work activities of the Federation, an executive—a sympathetic tycoon in Pittsburgh, one of our major executives whom we had forgotten to "fix," that is, to secure his sympathetic cooperation I should rather say in more academic terms—got a spasm of economy, while in the chair, and stubbornly balked the addition of that function.

However, I can report that we aspire to renewed effort. Miss Kennedy sent her regrets at being unable to be here today. I think we may be able to report next year that we have been able to add the Motion Picture Council setup to our county-wide community council activity.

Community Councils were set up as an emergency effort during the relief emergency and they are now without adequate constructive functions, in the judgment of some; motion picture interest should constitute an important activity in the neighborhoods.

I want to bring a greeting from Dr. John Hollinger, a member of our National Council, who had hoped to be here with Dr. Kinder and myself.

As to the financial problem, which is of course basic, if we can get tied up with an organization such as the Federation of Social Agencies, which is financed by the

Community fund, then we have solved or at least gone a long way towards solving that problem. We then have a continuing Secretariat and the execution of the work which has been initiated in the community, it would seem to me, Mrs. Craig, the real problem of continuing effective administration, which you so ably stressed, might perhaps be permanently solved on a non-commercial basis.

It is splendid to have heard of this constructive work through the reports of you leaders in the many communities of the nation.

Do you not feel that the time has come for the Motion Picture Councils to assert themselves? I think we have been rather the stepchild of many communities, at least we have in Pittsburgh, in our efforts.

I think we need to assume a double measure of pride and devotion in our work because it is increasingly apparent from the testimony this morning that it is well worth while.

Indeed, the movies are sick. We know the papers and magazines have been full of accounts of the sickness. Of course the developments and the state of affairs in Europe have complicated the problem by limiting the foreign market for films and the economics of the industry have so been complicated. Also, the American public seems to be increasingly skeptical, and recently even dubious about certain offerings, and the attendance at pictures has been falling off.

Well, most of us have some suspicion as to why that is the case. There are too many banal and stupid films—too vast a gulf between technique and content—and the part of the public that is really anxious to see and appreciate better things, after a few such experiences, refrains from attending. (I think the idea of eliminating Bank Night is a splendid idea, by the way; it is too obvious a hoax).

There is a good deal of disillusionment with the movies and there is an increased challenge to constructive effort to raise the level of their performance.

The vast audience is available for organization to that end. The Renoir film we will see at this Conference, *Grand Illusion*, is for instance running for its seventh or eighth week at our Art Cinema in Pittsburgh. We

had good advertisement, by the way, regarding its high rating by the National Board, and learned that it is an exceptional film.

If we base our Council organization on a city-wide basis, the problem of the cooperation of the trade will solve itself. The producers, the distributors, the exhibitors are business men. They have "public relations counsels." Their ears are close to the ground. When a whole community led by the women representing the clubs, the school system, the settlements, the Parent-Teacher Councils, and other leading citizens move in, you may expect, and you will secure more complete cooperation in constructive execution of all of your programs as never before.

To my mind, in America today "the play is the thing" and the play is the movies. The National Board and your local groups have the programs to help redeem the movies from a ten or eleven year level to adulthood for a fuller expression of an artistic and intellectual interpretation of American life.

Mrs. Joseph L. White
Chairman, Montclair (N. J.) Motion
Picture Council

SEVERAL years ago a conscientious mother was heard to say that she had solved the motion picture problem for her children. She had made up her mind that all of her children, four in number, ranging from twelve years down, should see only animal pictures. She thought in this way she would prevent them from seeing anything that was harmful. One day carrying out this idea she rose early in the morning to get the housework done so she could take them down to see *The Animal Kingdom*. She found that it wasn't at all the picture she thought it would be from the title.

At that stage the Motion Picture Council was born in Montclair. The first job that it had on its hands was to interpret the motion picture titles to the public. We have maintained that as the heart of our work ever since we started seven years ago.

We publish a review service twice a month, that is subscribed to on a private subscription basis. It is posted in the libraries and in the schools, so that it is read by a great many people. Whenever we find that interest is lagging a little, we say now is the time we have to have a new cover. Then

the Art Departments of the schools compete in a contest and a new cover is chosen. In that way the boy or girl who succeeds in making the best cover has some publicity, the Motion Picture Council and its review service has some publicity and we are all very happy.

We maintain what we call a still picture library. There is a set of stills that comes with every motion picture. We take the stills for the outstanding pictures and file them in a large manila envelope at the library. On it we have the cast of characters, the name of the producer, and so forth. These envelopes are circulated just like books. They are used by the schools in the study of the classics. The women's clubs use those of costume pictures to study costumes, and they make good entertainment material for shut-ins. They are constantly in circulation in Montclair through the library.

We also through demand act as a speaker's bureau. We are called up all the time by Parent-Teachers Associations in neighboring towns to send somebody to speak. And we are very glad to fill this need.

We make an effort to have our vacation programs at the theatre very satisfying. A survey was made of the Montclair children's movie habits* and we found that vacation time was the time when movie attendance went up by leaps and bounds. The dates of vacations are given to our exhibitors and we say, "These are the times we want you to have some especially outstanding pictures." We get a great deal of cooperation from the exhibitors in this.

This year we have established a new custom, that is to bring to Montclair some of the foreign films. We do this in cooperation with the Foreign Language departments of the schools. *Pearls of the Crown* was shown before six or seven hundred high school children who were studying French. They came not only from Montclair but from the neighboring towns by bus. Before the showing of the film we had sent press sheets to the Foreign Language departments and the teachers used them, discussing them in French. We expect to do the same with *Grand Illusion*, which we are hoping to bring soon. We find this not only gives the French Department something

vital and current to talk about, but it develops in the children some ideas as to the evaluation of the movies, as they compare the French and the American films.

We have regular monthly board meetings. Each year we have a turnover of our members so we always have the education of new members. We try to bring speakers several times from the Board members.

We are small in Montclair and have only three theatres but it keeps us busy all the time and we find it an interesting and challenging job.

A reading of these reports offers a well-nigh complete picture of what Motion Picture Councils and other like groups are doing in their organized community motion picture activity, with an indication of its extent. If those of our readers in communities where no such groups exist feel they would like to bring the plan before leading organizations with the thought of introducing a unified program of motion picture activity, helps for this are available from the National Council of the National Board of Review, particularly in "The Outline of Activity for Motion Picture Councils and other Film Study Groups", and as well in other papers devoted to specific activities of a community motion picture organization. We will be pleased to hear from and to assist any interested readers, and we feel certain those making these reports will be willing to give any further information which may be desired about what they are doing.

(Continued from page 2)

later when an enterprising police captain puts on the same show with the original cast. Well worked out with plenty of suspense. Universal.

- f IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD—Claudette Colbert, James Stewart. Original screen story by Ben Hecht and Herman J. Mankiewicz. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. A private detective and a poetess on a hunt for a murderer—farceical, quick moving, with a lot of laughs. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f INVITATION TO HAPPINESS — Irene Dunne, Fred MacMurray. Charles Ruggles. Based on a story by Mark Jerome. Directed by Wesley Ruggles. An interesting story of a prize fighter who marries a wealthy girl and the trouble that ensues when he neglects his wife and son for his profession. The direction and acting are both excellent. Paramount.
- f JONES FAMILY IN HOLLYWOOD, THE—The Jones Family. Original screen story by Joseph Hoffman and Buster Keaton. Directed by Malcolm St. Clair. Papa Jones goes to Hollywood with the American Legion, and takes the family along—they try to get into pictures, but in the end are glad to go back home. 20th Century-Fox.

(Continued on page 30)

*"Montclair Children and the Movies," a survey in 1933, price 25 cents.

Book Review

Don't Talk Too Much!

A Plea and a Play. By Welford Beaton. Published by the Hollywood Spectator, 6513 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, Cal. Price: \$1.00.

MR. BEATON, editor of the Hollywood Spectator, has been known for a long time as a fighter for the movie in its purest form. For years he has stressed the importance of telling a screen story in pictures and damned the tendency to let endless dialog bear the main burden of spinning the tale. The average movie, he says, contains between 1,500 and 2,500 "speeches," when it might be managed with around 200. Where proper use of the camera and a careful script fail to do the whole job of reducing dialog and superfluous sounds to a minimum, Mr. Beaton feels music can help a lot. Music, he sees as the one harmonious sound factor in the whole business of making a movie and one which will adequately make up for any lack of other sounds. To demonstrate his contentions he has followed up his "plea" with a "play", a script containing only 162 set speeches. It is quite a trite little story, and what dialog it has can only encourage the reader to do away with dialog altogether. But one may presume that it exists solely for purposes of demonstration—like a corpse up for dissection—and so forget its content and consider the conclusions to be drawn from it.

I don't think many readers of Mr. Beaton's book will have much to say against his main argument: that dialog should enter the picture only when the camera is incapable of carrying on the story alone. But they may be more critical of his views on sound generally: that it should be brought in only at strategic moments with the musical sound track carrying the continuity. Mr. Beaton believes that the close-up of an angry man breathing curses and threats should be photographed, but not recorded; that a ball timed to explode on contact with something, should roll in silence, but may explode at the top of its voice. This limiting of sound would, he feels, increase audience excitement and not break the silent march of the pictures too badly. In brief, the screen must

be kept for the eye alone; the intellect and hearing must be ignored whenever possible.

This is carrying the argument further than is usually done. Most critics draw a fairly sharp dividing line between *dialog* and *sound*, feeling that the latter is not an obtrusive thing when properly handled. To me it seems that sound employed simply for dramatic effects—as Mr. Beaton wishes it to be used—would strike a highly unnatural note, appearing here and there at the whim of the director and emerging strangely from a world of images and musical accompaniment. Alfred Hitchcock, writing for this magazine last year, pointed out this danger of unnatural sound repression. Hitchcock believes that there should be sound effects of some kind throughout the film, and that a dropping of such effects, suddenly, will tend to let the picture drop too. He opposes, too, "the toning down of sound to suit the convenience of the story," which he considers introduces unnatural breaks. Mr. Beaton's contention, however, is that the musical accompaniment can take care of these breaks, without turning the story from a visual affair into an aural affair—as other sounds would do.

As I have said, most of us will gladly go along with Mr. Beaton in his plea for less dialog. But his demand for the restriction of both dialog and sound does take one back to a consideration of the old silent film with its musical accompaniment and printed subtitles, and these old films tell us pretty plainly what a valuable adjunct to screen entertainment sound and dialog have become. Mr. Beaton argues that the old sub-titles were not disconcerting because they were not heard: more often than not, I believe, a few spoken words turn out to be far less disconcerting. Furthermore one is apt to forget how stilted and unnatural many of the silents were; the exaggerated gestures and grimaces resulting from the impossibility of speech or sound. What Mr. Beaton calls "photographed dialog" may be all right in certain individual scenes, but it is hard to believe that a feature picture, in which most of the dialog was lip-reading to the audience, and a limited amount spoken for their ears to hear, would not only seem unnatural but upsetting to the general harmony of the picture.

N.D.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional and Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Young Mr. Lincoln

Written by Lamar Trotti, directed by John Ford, photographed by Bert Glennon, music by Alfred Newman, associate producer Kenneth Macgowan. Produced and distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox.

The Cast

Abraham Lincoln	Henry Fonda
Abigail Clay	Alice Brady
Matt Clay	Richard Cromwell
Adam Clay	Eddie Quillan
Mary Todd	Marjorie Weaver
Ann Rutledge	Pauline Moore
Hannah Clay	Arleen Whelan
Carrie Sue	Doris Bowdon
Judge Herbert A. Bell	Spencer Charters
John Felder	Donald Meek
Stephan A. Douglas	Milburn Stone
Palmer Cass	Ward Bond
Scrub White	Fred Kohler, Jr.
Efe	Eddie Collins
Ninian Edwards	Charles Tannen
Mrs. Edwards	Kay Linaker
Sheriff Billings	Cliff Clark
Juror	Robert Lowery
Frank Ford	Francis Ford
Barber	Harry Tyler
John T. Stuart	Edwin Maxwell
Woolridge	Russell Simpson
Hawthorn	Charles Halton

PROBABLY no character—even Tarzan—has been played by more actors on the screen than Abraham Lincoln. In the silent-picture days these portrayals culminated in Joseph Henaberry's shawldraped pious figure in *The Birth of a Nation*. Frank McGlynn, after a good seasoning in John Drinkwater's play, has been on call for the part for years, and unlike the case of the boarding-house actor in *A Star is Born*, the call has come over and over again. Walter Huston and John Carradine are remembered. Now there is Henry Fonda—and Raymond Massey on the way.

Biographers are still working on Lincoln:

no one has yet put into a book all that may some day be known and inferred about him. And the present-day movies do not tackle him so confidently as of yore, as if they could cover his whole life in a few thousand feet of film. *Young Mr. Lincoln* very sensibly confines itself to what is implied in its title—the period when he was becoming enough of a local dignitary to be called something besides the familiar "Abe," and before he had reached, even in the eyes of his admirers, what could be called maturity. The period when he was painfully hesitating, to paraphrase the lines given to him in the film, about setting himself up to know so much that he didn't know. It is a very much simplified film—wherein lies its strength—devoted to his decision to become a lawyer and to his handling of a case that makes a good dramatic climax for the picture. The case used (it was actually the Armstrong case, using different names, which came a few years later in Lincoln's career) has been considerably touched up for dramatic effect, but it retains his famous use of the almanac to free his client, and the fictionizing is entirely justified. Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge is merely hinted at, but eloquently; his wooing of Mary Owens is omitted entirely, and Mary Todd, as well as Stephen Douglas, is a mere incidental figure with no hint of the part she is to play in his life.

It is an ambling, hesitant sort of film, very like Lincoln himself, and it is easy to think that John Ford deliberately made it that way instead of brisk and hard-hitting, for his own good reasons. As the pace is leisurely, so are the incidents pared down to essentials. His campaign speech at the

beginning, for instance, when he first ran for the state legislature: it actually took place, as people afterward recalled, at an auction of farm animals, and before he spoke Lincoln had to break up a fight in the crowd; but in the film he simply says the words a certain Bill Green has reported, ending "If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same." So with the Ann Rutledge episode: just one little talk by the river with her, and a hint of what her expectations of him did to spur his ambition, reinforced by a simple scene later at her grave. Then his entry into Springfield to set up in law practice, and how he settled out of court a case in which two farmers were suing each other. Only that to show how he got started as a lawyer and what had started him—unsure of himself, enormously diffident, acutely aware of his educational shortcomings and depending on his native common sense, his native wit and his closeness to the common run of man to get along. Then his defense of the Clay boys, first from lynching and then from hanging. And he is on his way to his future.

It is deceptively simple, so few things seem to happen and yet so much is shown. Not the ribald Lincoln, not the rough-and-tumble Lincoln, not the Lincoln in love (what a complicated thing "The Loves of Abraham Lincoln" would be if some one had the temerity to try it!), nor the Lincoln who was such a superb actor when he got going before an audience. But, plain and moving, the Lincoln who became America's symbol for the man of the people, the Lincoln whose humanity was his greatest quality. Which is the essential and most important thing.

The film would have been improved by more roughness and uncouthness. The log-cabin where the Clays lived, the people listening to the campaign speeches at the country store, the country people thronging into Springfield for the parade day, are all too neat and gentle to prepare for the free-and-easy courtroom scene, which, mild though it probably is in comparison with the realities of Illinois in the eighteenth-thirties, seems over-done and played for laughs because the key for the behavior of rough folks hardly emerged from the backwoods stage has not been set.

This refining has gone a bit into the portrayal of Lincoln himself. Nature did a lot to make Henry Fonda a natural choice for the part—his lankiness, his laziness, his drawl, so that a crafty touch from the make-up man was enough to re-create any number of the younger Lincoln portraits. (The camera-man was fatally conscious of this—whenever Mr. Fonda got into a typical Lincoln pose the camera lingered and lingered over it.) But he is so well-dressed that when he goes to the Edwards ball he is no different from when slouching in his office, and that well-dressed effect has a way of cropping out in a lot of his actions and speech.

The other people are largely background, some of them vivid and colorful, some of them—like Stephen Douglas—pure phoney. The Clays, even Alice Brady, don't do a very convincing job of being log-cabin people. Their clothes just weren't lived in—they came from the wardrobe department, and brought no magic with them.

If John Ford couldn't have his Dublin fog, he could have torch-lights and misty river vistas to suit his taste for the picturesque. His lovely outdoor scenes do a lot to create a young America for young Mr. Lincoln to live in. Combining man with background he has made one of our best historical pictures.—J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional

Goodbye Mr. Chips

Adapted by R. C. Sheriff, Claudine West and Eric Maschwitz from James Hilton's novel, directed by Sam Wood, photographed by F. A. Young, musical director Louis Levy. Associate producer Victor Saville. Produced and distributed by Metro Goldwyn Mayer.

The Cast

<i>Mr. Chips</i>	Robert Donat
<i>Katherine</i>	Greer Garson
<i>Wetherby</i>	Lyn Harding
<i>Staefel</i>	Paul Von Hernald
<i>Flora</i>	Judith Furse
<i>John Colley</i>	} Terry Kilburn
<i>Peter Colley I</i>	
<i>Peter Colley II</i>	
<i>Peter Colley III</i>	
<i>Sir John Colley</i>	Scott Sunderland
<i>Peter Colley (as a young man)</i>	John Mills
<i>Chatteris</i>	Milton Rosmer
<i>Marshall</i>	Frederick Liester
<i>Ralston</i>	Austin Trevor
<i>Jackson</i>	David Tree
<i>Colonel Morgan</i>	Edmond Breon
<i>Helen Colley</i>	Jill Furse
<i>Mrs. Wickett</i>	Louise Hampton

*Robert Donat
as the
elderly
Mr. Chips in
"Goodbye Mr. Chips"*



GOODBYE MR. CHIPS will be a great treat to those who like *Goodbye Mr. Chips*, and their number appears to be legion, including Mr. James Hilton who wrote it and Mr. Alexander Woolcott whose ecstatic appreciation did so much to make it a best-seller. Those sales are probably what made the book seem a fair bet for the movies, for no unlikelier book for screening comes easily to mind, so little story had it, so gentle and uneventful Mr. Hilton's fond sketch of an insignificant little English schoolmaster. That it made a motion picture which so many people find engrossing is something of a movie-maker's triumph.

Mr. Chipping was a master in an English public school (high-toned private school to us), shy, rather tactless, a bit heavy-witted, who didn't get along well with the boys because they had a disconcerting and often cruel boyish gift of seeing through him

perfectly, missing only a sort of quaint sweetness in his nature which it took a charming maiden lady to discover during a holiday in the Tyrolean Alps. This lady married him, and by her understanding and tact and charm she bridged the gulf for him between him and the boys, so that when a little while later she died he was already established as "Chips," on his way to becoming one of the traditions of the school. That he remained for generations, till in his old age when all the able-bodied men were fighting in the war he was eventually made head-master, a beloved, twinkling, chirruping oddity who had become as much a part of the institution as the ivy clinging to its gray old buildings. In the picture it is thus that we first meet him, and after a flash-back through his life, thus that we bid him goodbye, thus that we are made to feel we are meant to

think of him as going on forever—something “that is for ever England.”

This undramatic material has been presented in a curiously effective fashion, due mostly to acting and atmosphere. There is no particular skill or imagination in either the writing or the directing. The devices for skipping from one generation to another—the scattered remarks among the boys about the newly-invented telephone, the Boer War, someone flying the Channel—are entirely stale and perfunctory, and the *reprise* of all the boys of all the generations passing swiftly by like ghosts had its freshest and most effective incarnation in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. But the mere fact that the picture was made in England has its force, giving it native background and solid validity, and several acting performances put vitality into a placid narrative that might otherwise have been pretty tepid.

Robert Donat seems at first sight to be the most noteworthy, because his is such a bravura performance, he being so young and making himself so convincingly old. It isn't a mere matter of grease-paint wrinkles and gray hair, or a creaky stiffness of joints: he has got something slyly senile into the part of him that is behind the mask, a movement of both mind and face muscles that is the very essence of great-uncles who live forever. It is really a remarkable character creation, a bit comic instead of pathetic because he so obviously enjoys having arrived at an age where he is an institution, without any more need to make sure his clothes are on straight and all his buttons buttoned.

But if it were all Mr. Chips it would have rather too much sugar to it: it needs, and gets, the tonic saltiness of Kathy, and the acid veracity of the boys. Kathy might seem just a nice bread-and-butter lady anywhere else, played by anyone else, but here, amid so much Chipsiness, it is so downright refreshing to come across a face and voice and manner like Greer Garson's, all so radiantly new, that she seems like a vigorous breeze blowing into a musty room. Miss Garson may be just a very good actress whose talents seem enchanting because they are unfamiliar, but brief as her time in the picture is she is the character

who gives the plot its one step forward, the one bright, positive person in the long years, to be gratefully and delightedly remembered.

And there are the boys, the stream of boys always flowing endlessly through the school, with their pert and cheery little egos, indifferent or contemptuous or polite to the foginess of Mr. Chips, as the case may be, the test that Mr. Chips could never pass till he had become a tradition. They are very varied and very real, these boys, all except Terry Kilburn, of whom, unfortunately, there is much too much. He crops up in four generations, always so unvaryingly the same that he turns the time-clock backward and you have to look at Robert Donat's make-up to make sure what decade you are in.

Probably no one concerned with this picture had anything much in mind except to turn out something enjoyably tender and sentimental, certainly not to stir up any serious thought about the state of the British Empire. Yet, by sticking so comfortably in its own little corner, with a sort of assumption that that corner is the heart and brains of England, by its aloofness and lack of reference to anything vital outside, it does tend to rouse a faint uneasiness. Is Mr. Chips significant after all, maybe a symbol? Mr. Chips whom the boys despised so healthily and heartily, and yet came back as men to pet and cherish, and point out to their own boys as a vital force in their lives?—J.S.H.

Rated Honorable Mention

Movies of the World

LAST summer the Fifth Avenue Playhouse of New York City took the progressive step of presenting a program of outstanding international films. This summer the same theater is repeating such a program, though the films it will show between July 1st and September 11th, will include a large number that were not shown in the program of last summer. The list of films includes many excellent productions that are bound to appeal to our readers. Special prices are available to clubs and organizations, and complete information and

programs are available on request. Write to Miss Augusta Shemin, International Film Festival, 66 Fifth Avenue, New York City. We believe that the proposed program, listed below, will be of interest not only to local readers but to many living outside the city, as an example of international selections.

FRANCE *Grand Illusion*, *Mayerling*, *Crime et Chatiment*, *Club de Femmes*, *Sous les Toits de Paris*, *Le Million*, *Generals Without Buttons*, *Carnet de Bal*, *Pearls of the Crown*, *A Nous La Liberte*, *Carnival in Flanders*, *Le Dernier Milliardaire*. IRELAND *Man of Aran*. POLAND *Halka*. HUNGARY *Janos Vites*. GERMANY (B.H.) *M or The Kidnapper*, *The Captain of Koepenick*. CZECHOSLOVAKIA (B. H.) *Crisis*. PALESTINE *The Land of Promise*. EGYPT *Wedad (Slave Girl)*. SPAIN *The Spanish Earth*. ENGLAND *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *Moonlight Sonata*, *To the Victor*, *The Edge of the World*, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *The Lady Vanishes*. MEXICO *The Adventures of Chico*, *The Wave*. ITALY (B.M.) *Cabiria*.

UNITED STATES *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Modern Times*, *Walt Disney Academy Award Review*, *The Scoundrel*, *Make Way For Tomorrow*, *Blockade*, *Night Must Fall*, *100 Men and a Girl*, *The Good Earth*. SWEDEN *The Great John Ericsson*. CHINA *The 400 Million*. GREECE *Prosfygopoula*. DENMARK *Sol Over Denmark*. AUSTRIA (B.H.) *Zwei Herzen Im Dreiviertel Takt*, *Tales From the Vienna Woods*.

RUSSIA *Potemkin*, *Chapayev*, *Professor Mamlock*, *The Youth of Maxim*, *Childhood of Maxim Gorky*, *The New Gulliver*. SWITZERLAND *The Eternal Mask*. FINLAND *Niskavuoren Naiset*.

It has been brought to our attention that in the announcement of the Museum of Modern Art film showings in our last issue, the 25c admission might seem to apply to viewing the films, it is however the price of admission to the Museum, and the films can be viewed free by museum visitors.

(Continued from page 24)

m LUCKY NIGHT—Myrna Loy, Robert Taylor. Original screen story by Oliver Claxton. Directed by Norman Taurog. A playful and chatty comedy about a couple who got married the same day they met, and afterwards couldn't decide whether to take life

seriously or irresponsibly. The cast is the most attractive thing about the picture. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- m LUCRECE BORGIA — Edwige Feuillere, Gabrielle Gabrio. Original screen story by Leopold Marchand. Directed by Abel Gance. An ornate and somewhat gruesome tale of the famous Borgias, recording Caesar Borgia's plots against his enemies and his use of his sister Lucrece to help him realize his ambitions. Plenty of sustained excitement and highly dramatic moments. Recommended strictly for mature audiences on account of theme and general treatment. (French production). Gallic Films, Inc.
- f NANCY DREW, TROUBLE SHOOTER—Bonita Granville, Frankie Thomas. Original screen story by Kenneth Gamet. Directed by William Clemens. Nancy with the help of her boy friend solves a murder mystery and has plenty of thrills while sleuthing. Warner Bros.
- f *ONLY ANGELS HAVE WINGS — Cary Grant, Jean Arthur, Thomas Mitchell, Richard Barthelmess. Original screen story by Jules Furthman. Directed by Howard Hawks. An air-mail story laid in tropical America, romantic, human, thrilling, well directed with an excellent cast and written with a lot of convincing detail to make its pattern seem new. It involves heroic flying and the rehabilitation of a man whose nerve had once failed him, along with an engaging love story. Columbia.
- m PANAMA LADY—Lucille Ball. Allan Lane. Original screen story by Garret Fort. Directed by Jack Hivley. Melodrama, attractively acted by its two principals, about a girl from a cheap cabaret in the tropics who kept a tough engineer at a distance until he loved her properly. RKO Radio.
- f ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE—Alice Faye, Tyrone Power, Al Jolson. Original screen story by John Larkin and Jerry Horwin. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. The main story is about a girl who became a Follies star, and her love for a weak and handsome lad who eventually went to prison, but there is a lot of detail in the Broadway and night life of just-after-the-war, a handsome collection of favorite old songs, and Al Jolson repeating his old Winter Garden self with fine verve. 20th Century.
- fj SOUTHWARD HO!—Roy Rogers. Original screen story by John Rathmell. Directed by Joseph Kane. An interesting and colorful tale of reconstruction days in Texas. Republic.
- m *STOLEN LIFE—Elizabeth Bergner, Michael Redgrave. Novel by K. J. Benes. Directed by Paul Czinner. A psychological drama of twin sisters, in which Miss Bergner plays the difficult dual role with dramatic effect. The direction of Czinner is also effective. (British Production). Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photographs. Paramount.

f TELL NO TALES—Melvyn Douglas, Louise Platt, Gene Lockhart. Original screen story by Pauline London and Alfred Taylor. Directed by Leslie Fenton. The editor saves his newspaper from going out of business by solving a kidnapping mystery. Written and directed with unusual adroitness, with individuality of characters and intriguing situations. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f UNDERCOVER DOCTOR—Lloyd Nolan, Janice Logan, J. Carrol Naish. From J. Edgar Hoover's "Persons in Hiding." Directed by Louis King. A G-Men story. A doctor makes his fortune by operating on criminals, he also works for the police to cover up, but the long arm of the law finally catches up with him. Paramount.

m WARE CASE, THE—Clive Brook, Barry Barnes, Jane Baxter. Original screen story by George Pleydell Brancroft. Directed by Robert Stevenson. An excellently handled crime story with sustained tension and good acting, especially by Clive Brook. People involved are mainly upper-class English people who are very credibly realized. Sophisticated but dramatic, with very clever plotting and fine direction. (British Production). Gaumont British.

m WIDOWS' ISLAND—Paul Cavanagh, Marcelle Chantal. Novel by Mario Fort and Ralph E. Vanloo. Directed by Maurice Elvey. At a reunion of Englishmen on a Belgian battlefield the past comes back and nearly wrecks the happy marriage of an English soldier and a Belgian girl. Well acted, and with a plot that gets out of the usual movie-rut. (British Production). Modern Film Corp.

fj WOLF CALL—John Carroll, Movita. Novel by Jack London. Directed by George Waggner. Saving a radium deposit from some tricksters—in the Northwest, with a good dog and plenty of action. Monogram.

fj *YOUNG MR. LINCOLN—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 26.

m ZERO HOUR, THE—Frieda Inescort, Otto Kruger. Original screen story by Garret Fort. Directed by Sidney Salkow. The leisurely, rather sober romance of a lovely stage star, in which an orphan child plays a part, with the complications finally resolved by the noble suicide of a cripple to whom the lady feels she owes her devotion. Republic.

Informationals

f AIR WAVES (Reelisms)—An instructive tour of a radio station, with the history of a musical program. RKO Radio.

f DEVIL DRIVERS—Auto racing in places all over the world. RKO Radio.

f FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE—Covering making of parachutes; growth and preparation of coffee; weight reducing and concealing black eyes. Vitaphone.

fj *GOOD NEIGHBORS (Magic Carpet Series)—Good glimpses of capital cities in South America but particularly excellent for air-views of the Andes and traces of pre-Inca civilization. 20th Century-Fox.

fj *INSIDE BASEBALL (Ed Thorgensen Sports)—How many plays in baseball are made, with

close pictures of a lot of baseball stars in action. 20th Century-Fox.

f JAMAICA (Color Cruises)—A trip to interesting Jamaica done in color. Recommended for schools and libraries. Paramount.

f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 10, THE—Dixie, U.S.A.—a survey of the old South as it is today, with something of its social and economic problems and how they are being met. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.

f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED NO. 4 (Color Parade)—Laboratory aid to crime detection; candy making; rubber goods. Vitaphone.

f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 10—Gentlemen at Work—hired escorts; Oriental Fingers—the making of vases; The Song of the Year—"Thanks for the Memory." Paramount.

fj PICTURESQUE UDAIPUR (Fitzpatrick Travel-talk)—About one of the native states of India, in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 5—A school for old people; wood cutting; testing anti air-craft guns; showing how "Popeye the Sailor" cartoons are made. Paramount.

fj PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR (MGM Miniatures)—The life of Mathew Fontaine Maury and what he did for navigation. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f RADIO HAMS (Pete Smith Specialty)—Showing how amateur radio receiving sets can pick up calls for help and come to the rescue. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj RURAL HUNGARY (Fitzpatrick Travel Talk)—Showing in color Hungary in its more peaceful aspects. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj SAND HOGS (Newsreel Cameraman)—How a tunnel beneath the Hudson River was built. 20th Century-Fox.

f SMOOTH APPROACH (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Golf champs, doing expert approaching. RKO.

f SNOW FALLS (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Complicated skiing manouevers on the Alps. RKO Radio.

f SOLDIERS OF THE SEA (Reelisms)—How the Marines are recruited and trained. RKO Radio.

fj *SONS OF LIBERTY (Historical Technicolor Featurette)—The career of Haym Salomon, the patriotic Jew who did so much for Washington in the American Revolution. Vitaphone.

f VOODOO FIRES (Floyd Gibbons' "Your True Adventure")—An American's actual adventure with Voodoo. Vitaphone.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

f DARK MAGIC—Robert Benchley buys a box of tricks for his boy—typical Benchley humor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f DEAN OF THE PASTEBOARDS (Vitaphone Varieties)—Luis Zingone, with card tricks, shows how gamblers are able to cheat. Vitaphone.

f HOAGY CARMICHAEL—Jack Teagarden and his orchestra playing some well known tunes. Paramount.

f HOME EARLY—Robert Benchley gets home from the office to find a bridge club meeting with his wife. Funny. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE (Serial) NOS. 14-15—Robert Livingston. Screen story by Sol Schor and Barry Shipman. Directed by William Witney and John English. The end of the adventures of the Lone Ranger. Republic.

f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO 7—Once more—stars at play. Columbia.

Cartoons and Comedies

fj BARNYARD EGG-CITEMENT (Terry-Toons)—The birth and infant adventure of a chick, in color. Cute. 20th Century-Fox.

fj BOLO MOLA LAND (Lantz Cartoon)—A very funny cartoon of a cruise to queer places. Universal.

j COUSIN WILBUR (Our Gang)—An Our Gang comedy, with Alfalfa's bespectacled cousin turning out to be anything but a sissy. Metro.

fj HOCKEY CHAMP (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck shows determination but little skill on the ice-hockey field. RKO Radio.

fj LITTLE GOLDFISH, THE (Harmon-Ising Happy Harmonies)—About a goldfish's dream. Done in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj SEA SCOUTS (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck training the three youngsters in sea perils. RKO Radio.

fj THEIR LAST BEAN (Terry-Toons)—An amusing cartoon about how a fox got a good meal for his family. 20th Century-Fox.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions

\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual) 25c

Special Film Lists 10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status free

National Board of Review—How It Works free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils 10c

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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October, 1939



The Bonaparte family in "Golden Boy" (see page 11)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE—Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Ida Lupino. Novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Directed by Alfred Werker. Familiar Doyle characters, with Professor Moriarty as the villain, in a freshened up mystery, combining murder with the theft of the crown jewels from the Tower of London. Well done. 20th Century-Fox.

f BLONDIE TAKES A VACATION—Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake, Larry Sims—Original screen story by Richard Flournoy. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. The Bumpsteads finally get their vacation, with Baby Dumpling and Daisy playing decisive parts in an adventurous, amusing time. This series is building nicely in entertainment value. Columbia.

f DUST BE MY DESTINY—John Garfield, Priscilla Lane, Alan Hale. Based on novel by Jerome Odlum. Directed by Lewis Seiler. Some interesting characters, attractively and sympathetically played, give force to a story about a young couple entangled in the aftermath of an undeserved jail sentence. Warner Bros.

m ELSA MAXWELL'S HOTEL FOR WOMEN—Ann Sothern, Linda Darnell, James Ellison, John Halliday, Elsa Maxwell. Based on a story by Elsa Maxwell and Kathryn Scola. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. This hotel is apparently chiefly inhabited by women on the make—careers, husbands, etc.—and one particular girl setting out to recapture a young man she has lost. Lively and bright in the "columnist" style, with Elsa Maxwell appearing briefly with advice and wisecracks. 20th Century-Fox.

f FIFTH AVENUE GIRL—Ginger Rogers, Walter Connolly, Verree Teasdale. Screenplay by Allan Scott. Directed by Gregory La Cava. A light and amusing comedy of a harried business man who is given a new lease on life and a reformed family by a girl he meets in the park. Not as good as some of Ginger's pictures, with overmuch dialog, but full of good bits for all its patchiness. RKO Radio.

f FLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT—Phil Regan, Jean Parker, Noah Beery, Jr. Original screen story by Daniel Moore and Hugh King. Directed by Sidney Salkow. The career of a romantic playboy flier, who atones for his irresponsibility by a heroic sacrifice. Republic.

m FULL CONFESSION—Victor McLaglen, Joseph Calleia, Barry Fitzgerald. Original screen story by Leo Berinski. Directed by John Farrow. The efforts of a priest to make a murderer confess his crime so an innocent man will not be executed. The problem of a priest bound by the seal of the confessional makes an unusual drama, though a sombre one. RKO Radio.

m *GOLDEN BOY—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. p. 11.

m *HARVEST—French Cinema Center. See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 14.

m IN NAME ONLY—Cary Grant, Carole Lombard, Kay Francis. Based on novel "Memory of Love" by Bessie Breuer. Directed by John Cromwell. Eternal triangle story, unusual in that it brings to the screen a fairly frank treatment of a husband and wife in conflict over the husband's desire for a divorce, which he finally obtains. The three principals, and Helen Vinson as a catty gossip, play their dramatic roles with a good deal of conviction. Good entertainment and direction. RKO Radio.

f IN OLD MONTEREY—Gene Autry. Original story by Gerald Geraghty and George Sherman. Directed by Joseph Kane. The struggle of some ranchers to keep their homes which the government wanted to take over as proving ground in preparations during a war scare. Republic.

m *JAMAICA INN—Charles Laughton, Leslie Banks, Emyln Williams, Maureen O'Hara. Based on novel by Daphne DuMaurier. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. An adventure tale of wreckers on the rocky Cornish coast in the early 18th Century—land pirates preying on shipwrecks. Cops-and-robbers in a romantic setting, with excellent characterizations and Hitchcock's directorial flair for melodrama. (British Production). Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Paramount. See page 13.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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National Board 1940 Conference Some Motion Picture Courses

THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures will hold its 16th annual Conference on the dates of February 1st-3rd, 1940, at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. We give you this word so that you may make plans to attend and will give you more details in future issues. Any ideas or suggestions for the program now in formation are welcomed.

WITH the autumn comes once again the study of the motion picture in the class room and the lecture hall, so let us look at some of the courses New York City offers.

At New York University there is to be given for the 6th year the well established course entitled "The Motion Picture: Its Artistic, Educational and Social Aspects," in the School of Education under the joint co-operation of the National Board of Review and the University, and directed by Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher. The School of Education is also offering two other courses. "Elementary Film Making for Educational Purposes" is designed for teachers who are interested in making their own films for visual instruction purposes; advisers of photoplay clubs who are directing student film-making groups; teachers of motion picture appreciation and community motion picture workers carrying on educational programs in the film field. "Class-Room and Educational Use of Motion Pictures," discusses the sources and availability and the

problems of selecting and evaluating educational films, teaching techniques in the use of films, etc. "The Cinema As Literary Art" is being offered in the English Department of this University. The historical and aesthetic development of both the silent and sound films is presented through lectures and by class discussion.

Columbia University has two motion picture courses in its University Extension Department. One in the Dramatic Arts which has been conducted for many years by Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson on "Scenario Writing and Production." Another in the Fine Arts, "The Development, Technique and Appreciation of the Motion Picture," by Iris Barry and John E. Abbott, of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

The Institute of Arts and Sciences of Columbia will present in co-operation with the Division of Motion Picture Study, ten outstanding motion pictures of the period 1915 to 1935. These showings will take place in McMillin Academic Theatre on various Wednesday evenings from October through February.

Dr. Thrasher, Mrs. Patterson and Mr. Abbott are all members of Committees of the National Board and each brings to the course a wide knowledge of the motion picture.

Hunter College in its Extension Session, Department of Art, offers a "Survey of the Motion Picture Field," by Mrs. Jeannette W. Emrich.

The Make-Up Artist in Hollywood

By MEL ARCHER

All of the procedures in preparation for the filming of a motion picture are of interest to those who study the motion picture, and one which is important but little known, in spite of this, is that of make-up. We believe this description by Mr. Archer, who is New York representative of Hollywood's famous House of Westmore, taken from a WNYC broadcast on the Film Forum of the National Board, will interest our readers.

IN its own way the House of Westmore functions rather like the House of Rothschild: the Rothschilds have a member of the family in every major capital, and the Westmores have a brother in every major studio. Perc Westmore is make-up director for Warner Brothers; Wally Westmore looks after Paramount; Buddy Westmore is beauty expert for Twentieth Century-Fox, and Monte Westmore is in charge of make-up at Selznick International—which means he's been handling *Gone with the Wind*, incidentally.

This family combination is the basis for the House's claim to have made up about ninety per cent of Hollywood's stars or feature players at one time or another. And lest that seem an impossibility, even with four brothers to handle it, let me explain something of the methods employed. Each of the four brothers concentrates on what is the most important factor in make-up, namely; deciding just how a star or feature player should be treated in the make-up room. As an example, let's take the make-up room at Warner Brothers—my home-lot and the studio with which I am most familiar.

I have mentioned that Perc Westmore is the brother in charge of Warner's. Under him he has a staff of twenty or thirty artists, including sculptors, hair-dressers, wig-workers and plastic men, everyone of whom is kept busy in a studio which has some ten films in production all the time. When a new production comes up, Perc's first step is to study the shooting script, and, most important, size up the type of story, it's period and background. Then, after the stars and feature players have been allotted their

roles, he must make the necessary make-up tests on each one of them in their various parts. No matter whether the story is a period or modern one, Perc has to spend days on character studies of the time and place involved before he can test a single actress for her part. Not until all this is behind him can he even approach the most important and most difficult problem of modern make-up—to handle the star in such a way that personality and individuality are not destroyed, while the historical likeness and accuracy are perfect.

Let's take Paul Muni in *Juarez* as an example. Perc spent three weeks testing Muni for the title role. He made a plaster cast of his face and individual features. Then, having obtained from pictures and data the authentic description of Juarez, he modelled the latter's characteristics onto the cast of Muni. From the complete cast, which combined both men, he took rubber impressions and pasted them onto Muni's own face. Cream and powder, applied in the normal way, hid the rubber and gave the face a natural appearance.

The make-up for Juarez, is of course an example of a rather extreme nature. Perc did Muni's make-up every day, sometimes having to spend two hours at a time in getting an exact duplicate of the make-up of the day before. As a rule the procedure is different: Perc tests the actor or actress for color and shows the results to the producer and director. When they have O.K.'d the tests, he makes a colored diagram chart of the face and simply turns the star over to the make-up chief in charge of the particular production. The chief is responsible for following the instructions exactly, and he has five or more assistants to help him. In the case of a strictly contemporary story everything is much simpler; we have simply to watch out for one thing—to make up the actress as subtly as possible, emphasizing her good features and subduing the poorer ones,

without detracting from her individual charm.

To help us in all this we follow a certain routine. First, Perc has to analyze the individual's skin condition and skin transparency under several different kinds of lighting conditions. When all the lights employed are turned on at once, their brilliance is the same as that supplied by two residential city blocks. In case it may seem to you that two blocks of light is altogether too much for a single star, let me point out that you must be able to detect the smallest flaws and blemishes. When this star's picture is projected onto the screen, it is magnified between two and four hundred times its normal size, and even the tiniest mistake in the make-up looks pretty big multiplied by four hundred.

The basis of our routine is our chart system, a system made absolutely essential by the enormous increase in film production. Through our charts all human faces are divided into seven basic types. The first of these is the "Oval", also known as the "Ideal" type. Bette Davis is an example. This type needs very little corrective made-up. Then comes the "Round" type — like Priscilla Lane — which appears to be quite full, with rounded jaw-line and forehead. Next, the "Square" type — like Carol Lombard — with a broad jaw, square chin line, and the forehead carrying the same square line at the temples and across the hair line. Then the "Oblong" type — like Loretta Young — a long, thin face with the forehead only slightly wider than the chin. Alice Faye represents the "Triangle" type; forehead appearing very narrow and tapering, the jaws very broad and wide. Turn this face upside down and you get the "Inverted Triangle" type, like Geraldine Fitzgerald: forehead very broad, jaws and chin tapering from the chin bone to the chin line quite abruptly. Usually a pointed chin goes with it. Finally there is the "Diamond" type, which you may find hard to imagine. It's represented by Claudette Colbert; extreme width to the cheek bones, very narrow forehead and pointed chin.

With each of these types a certain specified routine must be followed. Take the "Diamond", or Miss Colbert, type. The make-up artist must make her face balance more perfectly. He must lessen its breadth by using a shade darker foundation cream. He must keep her hair full across the forehead, so as to create an illusion of width where she has a tendency to thinness and hollowness. On the other hand, with an "Oblong" like Loretta Young, he must try to counteract the narrowness of the face, by arching the eyebrows, giving very full lips and doing the hair full at the sides.

All this is simplified by the charts themselves. Each of the seven types has a corresponding chart on which an outline of the type is printed. On the printed face Perc marks exactly where the make-up is to go, what shade it requires, and what highlights and shadows. Every one of these details must be followed exactly by the production chief.

I'd like to say a few words about this production chief and his studio, because most people have strange ideas about this department and imagine it full of grease, bottles, little boxes, and even dungarees. Actually the production chief's room is more like a doctor's laboratory than anything else. He and his assistants are dressed in spotless white, and the whole place is immaculately clean. He must be at the studio by six a.m., at which time he supervises the make-up of the extras and bit-players. Then come the stars and feature-players, at exact intervals. The whole cast must be completely made-up by eight o'clock, so that they can go on to the wardrobe department for fitting between eight and nine. Nine o'clock they must be on the set, ready for work. It's this need for precision and promptness that adds to the make-up man's difficulties, and when he comes through it successfully the star realizes how much she owes to him, and looks upon him as a firm friend.

And now something about the application of make-up. We no longer use the extreme methods of the past: the days of thick and heavy make-up are gone

forever. The modern camera film is sensitive to the slightest application of powder and cream. Such things as eye-brow shaving are finished with, too: eyebrow shaving harmed the eyes, and some of the stars you see to-day wearing colored glasses are not doing it simply to disguise themselves. Often they are paying the penalty of weak eyes caused by eyebrow shaving. To-day, we very seldom even pluck the eyebrows, and then only as much as is required to give them a clean form.

We make-up artists found ourselves faced with many new problems when technicolor made its appearance. The differences between black-and-white and technicolor are very great. Black-and-white, for example, makes it impossible for the artist to apply rouge, which creates a dark shadow, so when we want to accentuate certain features we use a dark shade foundation cream. In technicolor, however, anything but the lightest applications are tabu. We have to remember that the color camera holds three different kinds of film, each of which is sensitive to one of three colors—red, yellow and green. So when we make up the lips, for instance, instead of applying ordinary lip-stick we begin by wiping the lips clean. Then we apply a very pale lip-stick, and wipe the lips a second time. What color remains behind on the lips is ample for the sensitive color film to record. Had we used ordinary lip-stick in the normal way, the mouth would have appeared smudged and dark on the screen. What applies to lip-stick applies to all other technicolor cosmetics. Lightness of touch, and careful application, are the main rules we must follow.

It is my belief that the introduction of technicolor has caused the greatest modern advancement in the art of make-up. Technicolor has forced us to devise what are known as "Color Filtered Cosmetics". You know what happens to everyday make-up when it's caught under Neon lights, or under the bright reds, greens, blues and ambers of night clubs and cafes. The reflections from the red lights tend to wash out the rouge on the

cheeks, the lip rouge, and the natural coloring. The blue reflections blacken the lips and smudge the rouge. The same applies to my lady when she faces the technicolor camera. When she was a little girl she may have held a buttercup under her chin and been delighted at the rich golden reflection. The harsh reflections of to-day's colored lights are a far and unpleasant cry from the charm of the buttercup.

We have found that by using a blend of all the predominating colors, such as red, green, blue, yellow, white, we obtain a basic color which will counteract harsh reflections. This basic color is brown, a natural skin tone, and serves as the basic tone for color filtered cosmetics.

You may have noticed that I have laid great emphasis on similarities between the screen player and the plain citizen. This is because the aim of every good make-up artist should be to make the star look as natural and normal as the girl in the street. I cannot emphasize enough that our aim is naturalness and individuality, and that the only real difference between the star and her sister is that the former has an expert to handle her make-up and a highly sensitive camera to record the results.

MISS Susan Myrick of Macon, Georgia, who has been in Hollywood as an advisor for *Gone With the Wind* has returned with much enthusiasm. Mrs. Chestney of the Macon Better Films Committee writes to us that Miss Myrick claims that the outstanding Hollywood quality is efficiency. From the assistant director on down to the "grips" (who move the furniture) each person not only is right up to the minute on what is needed but they are trying to figure out what the director will call for tomorrow. Miss Myrick is still wondering how so many details in movies are right, what with so much to be seen to—and it all boils down to the alertness and efficiency of every person on the set. Perhaps instead of looking for boners, she says, we should marvel at correct details.

Amateur Movies in Homes and Schools

By BENJAMIN F. FARBER, JR.

Mr. Farber is editor of Practical Films for "Movie Makers." His detailed account of how to make a movie, given in a broadcast under the auspices of the National Board on WNYC contains useful information for any organization or individual wanting to make their own.

I think the first question to come into the head of the young amateur in regard to making his own movies, is: How much will it cost? This question depends for its answer to a certain extent on whether the prospective amateur is going to make his movies alone or with a group of amateurs. Of course, it's much easier for groups. An amateur movie club rarely charges more than two or three dollars a year for membership fees, so if enough prospective movie-makers get together, their equipment isn't going to cost them much.

Prices vary according to equipment. For a camera, a projector, and a screen, the lowest figure would be around twenty-five dollars. That would be for eight millimeter equipment—the size generally used by beginners. The more advanced amateurs, and those who do serious film-work in educational, medical or industrial fields, prefer sixteen millimeter. But you just double your expenses when you change from eight millimeter to sixteen. The size used in Hollywood—thirty-five millimeter—is quite out of the question for the beginner.

Whether or not you get better value for your money by using sixteen millimeter, in preference to eight, is a point that's open to a great deal of discussion. The problem hinges on how you are going to use the film when it is made. If it is to be shown on large screens, then the eight millimeter film is quite out of the question. But if your movies are for personal use in a small room at home or at school, then eight millimeter is perfectly satisfactory. Since amateur screenings are usually of the home or school variety, eight millimeter has been growing steadily in popularity.

I am often asked why it is not feasible to project eight millimeter film in a large auditorium. The problem is that of enlarging the image. Eight millimeter film is half the size of sixteen and must be magnified four times as much. The greater the enlargement, the less sharp is the projected picture. But on small screens eight millimeter gives you good focus and good detail, and is the answer to those who have not got auditorium screens in mind. Later, if their ambition grows, they can shift over to sixteen easily enough. If the price is holding them up they should remember there's always good second-hand equipment around that will take at least ten dollars off the price of a new outfit.

My own recommendation to the beginner is to form or join a club, rather than go ahead on his own. It's more economical, more fun, and more practical. A club can use a room at home, or at school, for its meetings, and can draw on all its members for work and ideas. They'll get along all right as long as they remember a few important things. First, they shouldn't let a chosen few of the members hog it over the others and monopolize all the most exciting jobs. The work should be equally divided among all members. No club is going to last very long if half its members are paying dues simply for sitting on the bench.

What subjects should they film? At first, the very simplest. By this I don't mean just odds and ends like baby in the bath, or Mother washing dishes. If such things are going to be filmed, they should be parts of larger and more general subjects. Baby in the bath, for example, should be just one part of a whole film about an average day in the life of a baby. Mother washing dishes would be part of a film made about an evening at home. In other words, amateurs should have a theme or a story planned in advance.

The first essential is the choosing of a subject that can be developed into a genuine movie. If the amateur wants to introduce his family, let him choose a family affair that can be developed from one stage to another. Take a family picnic, for example. The movie should open with the suggestion of a picnic being raised by some member of the family, then on to a family discussion of how the picnic should be planned, the preparations for it and finally scenes of the picnic itself and the trip home again. No movie-maker should start by making static shots of anything that comes along. Personally, I'd recommend starting with school activities. Let the club plan a whole story, say of a morning's work in the lab, or the making of the school magazine, or the training of the football squad.

You will notice that the subjects I have mentioned are more of a documentary nature than fictitious. This is because I believe better results are obtained from starting by making records of everyday scenes. Not only does this teach the club a lot technically, but it pleases the rest of the school, and gives club members more prestige and more applicants for membership. This means more money in the club box and opens up the possibilities of wider activities. Outside organizations, for instance, such as Chambers of Commerce and the Red Cross, are often pleased to have films made of their work.

It is a good thing for a club to start off with a few leading members who know something about handling a movie camera. If there is no experienced leader, however, the brightest brains can be detailed to work on the book of instructions and amateur guide, and learn the fundamentals thoroughly. Your local dealer, by the way, can often be a big help. And our organization, the Amateur Cinema League, is always ready to give assistance, and has pamphlets and information on the organization of clubs. Then there is the school dramatic club, but movie-makers should be careful about the kind of assistance they obtain from it. They must get it into their heads from

the first that the theater is not the same as the movies. A school movie club is going to start off all wrong if it tries to film a play that's been written for the stage. The result will be nothing but long sequences of staged scenes, full of dialog, and the camera, with its wonderful advantages of movement and angles, will simply be wasted. If the movie club is going to tie in with the dramatic club it will have to keep a steady head and learn the difference between the two mediums.

Now I would like to say something about one of the most important factors in film-making—planning the film. Members of the club should get together around a table and plan exactly how they are going to go about making their film. As I have said, they must first decide on a subject that *will make* a film; something with movement and continuity, and with a story that is told by the pictures and not by the sub-titles. They must note down exactly how every scene is going to be shot; whether it will be a long-shot, medium or close-up, and what angle it shall be shot from.

It is best for all the scenes to be shot as written, but this does not mean that they have to be shot *in the same order* as they are in the script. One of the advantages of making a movie is that you can begin at the end, or end at the beginning, if you like. If some of your scenes take place in the lab, for example, you should do them one after the other if possible; don't go off and film the other scenes until you're absolutely through with each prepared set. Then, when you've done all your shooting, get your editor and cutter to work, chopping out the clumsy, unnecessary bits, putting everything in the right order and getting the continuity smooth and speedy.

Putting in the titles is another important job that comes at the end of making the film. Good titles can help a picture a great deal. They are not to be used for telling the story—that's the job of the camera—but simply for explaining things that the camera cannot explain alone. If this rule is not followed, or the

titles are not carefully composed, they spoil the continuity and mood of the whole picture. Of course, it is possible to do away with most of the titles and have sound instead. I don't mean real synchronized sound, as they have in Hollywood movies, but a recorded accompaniment. If the club has made a documentary film and would like it to have a running commentary, one of their speakers' voices can be recorded on a disc, with music recorded in between his comments. This is a more reliable way than having the same commentator get up every time the film is shown and speak his piece, because once a disc has recorded the narrative it never hesitates or forgets its words!

And now, a word about making films in color. Color is a thrill for every amateur, and it can be used perfectly well in an eight or sixteen millimeter camera. But it's more of a problem than black-and-white, especially in the eight millimeter size. Not only does it cost twice as much as black-and-white, but it has to be handled much more carefully. For example, the movie-maker has to avoid any deep shadows when using color, and he has to watch his lighting. It is easiest to keep the lighting flat: back or side lights present considerable problems. For these and other reasons I think the beginner should begin with black-and-white. It will teach him about the play of light and shadow, and give him shadow effects he could never get in color. (Frequent trips to the movies, to see what Hollywood does in these respects, are bound to be helpful.) And another thing about black-and-white—you can make small mistakes and it won't matter very much. The developing machine will automatically correct them. But there is no such compensation for color films. Therefore, it is wise for the amateur to *learn how* with black-and-white, saving the glamor of color film until his experience will insure his making the most of it.

There are not really any serious problems that will stump the amateur once he has had a little experience and made some study of his camera. Take a mat-

ter such as getting the subject in proper focus. Now, focus is a fundamental problem that some cameras settle automatically by having fixed-focus lenses that keep everything in focus from six feet to infinity. But on cameras with focusing lenses, everything depends on how good a judge of distance the movie-maker is. That's where experience counts. And in the matter of making exposures, the amateur must have some sense of distinguishing bright light from shade, and cloudy, dull light from deep shadows. Once his decision has been made, a guide, fastened on the front of most cameras, will indicate what exposure should be used.

Books, experience, advice—these must be the mainstays of the beginner. There are no schools that train movie-makers, though there are a few courses in some colleges. Volumes like the handbook of the Amateur Cinema League, and individual consultations with members of the League staff, should answer all the really difficult problems.

There are also certain contests for amateurs, where they can see the work of contemporaries and get ideas for their own films, or even send in a prize-winning entry themselves. The National Board has a nation-wide yearly contest, open to entries from amateur groups belonging to the 4-Star Clubs. The Amateur Cinema League holds a large-scale contest every year. We get films from all parts of the world: last year we had over two hundred entries. We have no age categories or limitations of any kind: just so long as an amateur has a film to send in he has a chance to win the prize, no matter if he's just out of the cradle or just tottering into the grave. Entries are judged strictly irrespective of age and nationality.

This may seem a little hard on the younger entrants. But I would like to mention that last year the Honorable Mention prize went to a Los Angeles class from Lowell Junior High School. The kids made the entire script and production themselves, with an adult advising them but taking no part in the actual

work. It was their first film, too! Just a simple little tale of what happens in the classroom when the teacher walks out. And with it they sent a second film, even more interesting: a documentary showing how they made the first one. The two together were good enough to rank with other films executed by experts. The class wrote to us later and told us why their films had turned out so well. They were the result of whole weeks of research, study and planning; hard work put in for weeks before the camera was put into action. And that's really the only moral one can put before the people who want to make their own movies. If they're ready to sit down and find out what a movie is and what makes it move, and then plan out a definite story without evading issues and problems—then they have a good chance of turning out a reasonably good movie. It's not technical problems that cause bad films, it's the lack of unity and planning in the minds of those who make them.

Book Review

Documentary Film, by Paul Rotha, published by W. W. Norton & Co., Inc. Illustrated. Price \$3.75.

On the jacket of this book, but not anywhere on or in the book itself, is a sub-title "How the Motion Picture Records Our Civilization" which is a significant clue to the author's attitude toward his subject. Documentary films, to Mr. Rotha, are not mere records of fact (like a news reel) but records of facts with social significance, and with an interpretation of that significance implicit in the record. Thus his book becomes a plea, stated with immense conviction, for a definite objective in the making of documentary films, as well as a discussion of the methods of documentary.

Mr. Rotha, to judge by his books, started as an observer and analyst of films in the broadest sense—the whole field of cinema

was what he was looking at. His personal sympathies and ideals have led to a concentration of his interest upon films as a social medium, and that interest has developed from mere comment and criticism to actual production. His book is consequently something more than mere academic discussion: it is the argument of a practical creator for what he believes, and believes profoundly, to be the most important type of movie making. He has an almost passionate impatience with "entertainment" films unless they are made for amusement purely and solely—the more a fiction movie touches on actual problems of living, the more ruthlessly he examines it for not only documentary truth but for a definite point of view and objective back of its documentary elements, and the more harshly he criticizes it for its inevitable shortcomings. Mr. Rotha is a propagandist, in the most beneficent sense of the word, an idealist in social relationships who wants his ideals to prevail, and who believes the movies are the most effective medium for presenting and spreading those ideals.

"Documentary Film" is the most carefully planned and written of Mr. Rotha's books. A mere summary of its headings indicates its trend and scope. Under his "Introduction to Cinema" he considers social aspects, economic basis and commercial development, propaganda, film as an art, and documentary. Under "The Evolution of Documentary" there come the naturalist (romantic) tradition, the realist (continental) tradition, the news-reel tradition and the propagandist tradition—Soviet, British, German and Italian. Then there is a discussion of "Some Principles of Documentary", followed by "Documentary in the Making", under which are considered first the function of the producer, then the function of the director, with various details grouped under the headings of visual, sound and treatment, with conclusions derived from the whole exposition. Finally a general look into the future, and an extensive appendix of documentary directors and their principal films. There are innumerable good illustrations.

No one who is interested in the social aspects of films and film making should neglect to read this book.—J.S.H.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Golden Boy

Screenplay by Lewis Meltzer, Daniel Taradash, Sarah Y. Mason and Victor Herrman from the play by Clifford Odets, produced by William Perlberg under the direction of Rouben Mamoulian, photographed by Nock Musuraca and Karl Freund. Produced and distributed by Columbia.

The cast

Joe Bonaparte	William Holden
Lorna Moon	Barbara Stanwyck
Tom Moody	Adolph Menjou
Mr. Bonaparte	Lee J. Cobb
Eddie Fuseli	Joseph Calleia
Siggie	Sam Levene
Anna	Beatrice Blinn
Rozy Lewis	Edward Brophy
Borneo	Don Beddoe
Mr. Carp	William H. Strauss

FEW plays get transferred from the stage to the screen so directly and straightforwardly as *Golden Boy* has been. Some tough words which the sound track is never allowed to utter have been dropped, some highfalutin speeches about their souls which the two main characters gave vent to on the stage to give the play its spurious air of being a tragedy (as well as their quite unnecessary killing off at the end), and a minor character whose function was not so much dramatic as to provide a bit of tossed-in social significance. Otherwise the translation has been faithful and complete, even to implications, a proof that Clifford Odets wrote a good movie to begin with, which needed only screen treatment to round it out to its proper dimensions.

Fundamentally there is a struggle between two ways of life, or perhaps it might be called between life and non-life—symbolized quite literally in violin playing and prize-fighting. Joe Bonaparte, a vigorous young fellow of Italian parentage, has a good deal

of musical talent and a gentle, art-loving father who wants him to be a great violinist. But he would also like to live the life of a successful rich American, and he has picked up enough boxing skill in the gyms where he has been playing around to make him believe he can be a fight champion and get a lot of money the quick way. Luck gives him his chance and he takes it, but always with the other thing pulling at him—the feeling that his hands were to make music with, not to fight with. In the end Joe's hand becomes completely a symbol—it gets broken in the battle that brings him his big ring victory, and the violin playing is apparently finished for good and all. But it kills his opponent: a mere routine accident of prize-fighting, but something that wakes Joe up. In the play it made him think he had lost his soul, and in a delirium of reckless despair he went off celebrating with his girl, who had a mystical feeling of lostness too, and they got killed in an auto smash-up. In the film, with less fuzzy mysticism but much more plausibly, they decide that there is still hope for them and go on living, which is not so much a compromise with movie-goers' taste as it is a matter of plain common sense.

Mr. Odets has earned acclaim as a playwright for very definite talents: he can dramatize certain types of character vigorously, and put live speech into their mouths. Still quite young, he hasn't yet found his way to the bottom of some of the deeper soul problems of human kind in which he has a passionate interest, nor a way to express or discuss those problems in clean-cut fashion. Most of his characters who make up the lively background of his plays he

understands instinctively and presents with an accuracy that is almost photographic. But when he comes to characters he has not so much observed as imagined, he gets to groping in a Dostoevskian murk with no Dostoevsky inner light to guide him. His literate, soul-searching people haven't learned much about their souls, or how to talk about them.

The movie people have had the right instinct about these things, and have known how to handle them. They keep the Odets that is genuine and toss out the uncertainties. So we have on the screen two definite and vivid backgrounds: the Bonaparte home, with poppa's pessimistic friend Mr. Carp, his uxorial daughter Anna and his gabby son-in-law Siggie, but most of all poppa himself, serene and wise and all-pervading; and the world of the prize-ring, crafty, wise-cracking, impinging closely on gangsterdom, crowded with sharply drawn flashy personalities. The main story, Joe's conflicting ambitions and his love-story (fairly trite, that love-story, with its triangular aspect), gets a lot of sustenance from the backgrounds, which are human enough to give colorful warmth to a familiar plot pattern. The climax expands to an extent that the stage could not supply in the fight scenes, where the passions of the fight game spread out from the ring and the actual battle to the roaring crowd with terrifically eloquent pictorial comment, and there is an added scene in the dressing room of the dead negro fighter (trailing clouds of *Porgy*) that does more than pages of the most ambitious Odets dialogue to show how the Golden Boy saw the end of his get-rich-quick road.

Rouben Mamoulian has done one of his best jobs of directing and cast-picking. William Holden is a fresh and agreeable newcomer, not at all seasoned as an actor but by mere physical presence and frankness of personality carrying off the title role adequately. Barbara Stanwyck is herself, a bit more restrained than of yore, quite right for the girl, as Adolph Menjou is for the third point of the triangle. The lesser parts are the most vivid—Sam Levene and Edward Brophy, whose presence always brightens up any cast, Joseph Calleia with an element of subtle novelty in his gangster, and another

screen new-comer, Lee J. Cobb as Poppa Bonaparte—a singularly hearty performance. Curiously, however, though he speaks with a voice as authentic as Henry Armetta, there is an inescapable impression of an Esau somewhere in the background.—J.S.H.
Rated Honorable Mention

Summer Films

IT may be on account of the heat, or the war, but it isn't easy to remember much about the pictures that have come along this summer, any more than it would be easy to recall what stories one read in the Saturday Evening Post. There has been an outbreak of "Kiddie" movies with *The Wizard of Oz* setting the pace for elaborateness, one new starlet bearing the screen name of Gloria Jean who, properly handled, is likely to become popular, and *Babes in Arms* still to come. The gangster-prison film has been kept not so much alive as plodding along under artificial respiration, chiefly to give actors like James Cagney, John Garfield and George Raft chances to make repetitions of former successes, and to get the Dead End kids out of the Dead End into environments more acceptable to the family trade. Edward G. Robinson is coming along immediately in a vigorous and brutal chain-gang melodrama in which he is hero instead of villain, the villainy supplied by Gene Lockart in a modernized sort of Uriah Heep part that will probably stand out among the year's favorite detestables. And there are already rumblings of war pictures looming ahead, which are likely to be complicated by efforts to keep Hollywood neutral.

To go back more definitely, the pictures one can recall with the most pleasure cover quite a range in subject matter, with odd little indications here and there that pre-production censorship has either been nodding or been remembering that life doesn't begin and end in a bassinet. Nothing really revolutionary, however.

Stanley and Livingstone, by virtue of Spencer Tracy, some fine African backgrounds and a recognition that fact has good feet to stand on without being propped up by fiction, makes the familiar "Doctor Livingstone, I presume" something more than a phrase, presenting an historic adventure

as something that not only terminated successfully as mere adventure but was also an important step in the development of a man who became actually great in the opening up of the African continent. It is probably the one picture of the summer that ought to be kept available for showing indefinitely for its historical value.

At the other end of the scale, having only some African scenes in it in common with *Stanley and Livingstone*, is *Four Feathers*, an old story about a boy who was considered a coward, and came himself to believe he was a coward, because he didn't like the idea of killing people even as a soldier. He got over it, in some exciting adventures, and was eventually hailed as among the bravest of the brave, but it would all seem pretty old-fashioned if the Technicolor cameraman hadn't provided a lot of extremely lovely pictures to minimize the triteness of the tale.

Another tale dealing with old but picturesque material is *Jamaica Inn*, about smugglers on the Cornish coast back in the days of George the Fourth. It is a picture perhaps over-abundantly loaded with talent—namely Charles Laughton and Alfred Hitchcock as star and director respectively, two such weighty and vigorous personalities that put on a seesaw they can't help tossing each other up and down, to the utter destruction of all proper balance. It's a good show, with its eerie atmosphere and fast action and vividly costumed types, but neither the Hitchcock fan nor the Laughton fan is likely to find complete satisfaction in it.

In the realm of fantasy there has been a unique sort of thing called *On Borrowed Time*, in which death figures in the odd person of a Mr. Brink, who was compelled for a time to suspend his activities with embarrassing effects on the normal course of nature. It is quite gay for so serious a subject, and entertainingly novel. But it reminds one that something ought to be done to curb the growing Hollywood belief that an audience is cheered up after a final death scene by a blast of angel voices from the sound track.

The more vigorous comedies have been experimenting in what is sometimes called sophistication. Ginger Rogers is the leading star in this line, if only because the summer

has brought two pictures with her in her capacity of comedienne rather than as mere Astaire partner. *Bachelor Mother* is the better of the two, lively and a refreshing memory of the hot months. *In Name Only* perhaps shouldn't be called comedy, concerned as it is with a marital situation deeply troublesome to those involved, but the lighter aspects are what persist when one tries to recall what it was all about: the likeableness of Cary Grant and Carole Lombard and the possibly perverse delight of seeing Kay Francis being venomous instead of noble for a change. *The Women* carries feminine venom to the nth—no, possibly only the mth—degree. It is a tart and entertaining exploration of parlor, bedroom and bath gossip, Park Avenue style, with man always in the offing but never in sight. It is a resplendent and glittering affair, with a multitude of stars for which galaxy is a feeble word. There is more sweetness and weeping from Norma Shearer than was really needed to counteract its general acidity, but even with that it is a far cry from those other Women—the Little ones.

Quite a different hairpin is *The Old Maid*, oddly compounded of the age of innocence and the most unblushing exploitation of unmarried motherhood the screen has ventured on in many a long day. Just what ground there is for its astonishing success with the public is hard to figure out, though its excellencies are apparent enough. The reproduction of the atmosphere and manners and morals of its genteel period is just about perfect, and inherent in that perfection is a quietness, even drabness, strikingly out of tune with what usually constitutes entertainment these days. The undercover bitterness between the two women in their rival motherhood is a pretty terrible thing to contemplate seriously, and there's an awful lot of suffering involved. Maybe it's just far enough away to have lost its sting, to sorrow over at a distance gently and comfortably. Maybe, though—in fact, probably—it's Bette Davis. With all her Awards she has never touched the popular heart so effectually as she has apparently done here, and that without the slightest abatement of the sincerity and histrionic integrity that is one of her strongest characteristics.—J.S.H.



Fernandel and Gabriel Gabrio discuss the problem of breach-of-promise in "Harvest"

Films from Abroad

THIS summer has brought little to New York in the way of outstanding foreign films, apart from the foreign sections in the programs of revivals at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse and the Museum of Modern Art. Two new productions, however, call for consideration: the French film *Harvest*, and the Russian *Conquests of Peter the Great*. Completely dissimilar in theme and technique they are both likely runners for the foreign Ten Best of 1939.

Whether or not *Harvest* will be in a position to compete is still doubtful at the time of writing. Banned by the New York censors, the appeal by the distributors to the Board of Regents has yet to be decided.

The keynote to *Harvest* is essentially simplicity—in its characters, story and production. Based on the novel "Regain" by Jean Giono, it is a one-man adaptation, with Marcel Pagnol as scenarist, director and

producer. Arthur Honegger supplies a suitable musical accompaniment. The picture develops slowly and without effort, and succeeds throughout in sustaining interest without indulging in unconvincing dramatics.

The theme is regeneration—the transforming of deserted land into a productive unit, and, with it, the bringing back of life to those who do the work. Orane Demazis plays the part of the peasant woman who leaves her worthless master (Fernandel) and goes to live with a simple farmer (Gabriel Gabrio) who is filled with the urge to work the barren land and needs the encouragement of a help-mate. In plain and completely unspectacular sequences we are shown the stages from barrenness to harvest: the long trudges from farm to farm to borrow horses, a plowshare, harness and seed; the sowing of the seed and the nourishing of the crop, and the quietly dramatic climax of the village market where the new wheat stands in sacks before the buyers. If

we consider this simple tale from too rigid a standpoint we may find it nothing but a deluding pipe-dream; but if we are ready to grant the sincerity of its characters and their aims (and few will be able to resist them) we are likely to find it one of the most pleasing and satisfying productions of the year. The complete harmony existing between its various elements makes it a spell-binder in the truest sense of the word.

The more one considers this picture the less reason is apparent for its ban by the censors. However, the truth is probably that the average censor is bound to be more aware than the average film-goer of any incidental lapse from moral living in a picture. There is a tendency to examine individual portions of a film, as opposed to considering it as a whole. In the case of *Harvest*, the censors have singled out something that the average audience would probably not consider or notice at all—the fact that we are not told in as many words that the peasant girl and the farmer are married. While the attention of the audience is held throughout by the raising of crops, the censor is tensely awaiting a harvest of orange blossoms.

It is hard to believe that the Board of Regents will uphold the ban on *Harvest*. So many critics and respectable civic bodies have attacked the ban that a great deal of public indignation will be aroused by its sustinment.

(The Editors are pleased to announce that since the time of writing the ban on "Harvest" has been raised by the Board of Regents. The picture will have its premiere on October 2nd at the World Theatre in New York City.)

The Conquests of Peter the Great is a good successor to *Peter the First*—last year's Russian competitor for the Ten Best laurels. It has two distinct elements of appeal: the spectacular element of Peter's land and sea battles with the Swedes, and the far subtler, more poignant element of his battle with his son Alexis. The picture sets out to show the link between the national and personal battles—to portray Peter as a patriot whose determination to benefit his country led him to brutal extremes in the treatment of his traitorous son. Whether we, or history, can entirely agree with the

verdict of the film is a matter of opinion; certainly we are able to follow the conflicts that lead up to it with respect for the writing, directing and character portrayals. As in *Peter the First*, Vladimir Petrov directs, from a novel by Alexei Tolstoy, with Nikolai Simonov, and Nikolai Cherkassov in the principal roles.

MISS MURIEL ANGELUS, the English actress who played the feminine lead in "The Boys From Syracuse" in New York City, did a good deal of screen-work in Germany four or five years ago. She says they wanted the productions done in three languages: German, English and French, so they had three separate casts of those nationalities. The three casts quarreled plenty and agreed very little on their respective parts, until production was completely held up by international wrangling. The producer was a methodical gentleman and solved the problem in a practical way. The English cast was told it was not constitutionally fitted to be temperamental, and was locked up in a separate studio. The French and Germans were then brought together and left to fight it out.

ONE can presume that it will be some months before the importation of films from France and England shows signs of becoming limited. There must still be a number of films made in both those countries in the last six months for which exhibition in the United States has already been arranged. What we can expect after they have come and gone is doubtful; a complete cessation of French and British imports seems unlikely. Perhaps we can expect a number of second-rate productions of an earlier vintage, together with the revival of many films with a "war interest." What is most probable is an influx of propaganda films, the reviewing of which is likely to raise a good many knotty problems among reviewing groups.—N.D.

Some Visual Education Sessions

THIS is the time of year when many people are putting to practical use information on films in education, and we bring to their attention the proceedings of two visual education Conferences held earlier in the year.

One is the Second Annual Audio-Visual Education Conference, sponsored by the Pennsylvania College for Women in Pittsburgh, with the co-operation of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Duquesne University, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the University of Pittsburgh.

Subjects presented were: "Teaching Physical Science," "Character Education," "English Teachers and Motion Picture Appreciation Clubs in High Schools," "Vitalizing the P.T.A. Through the Use of Locally Produced Motion Pictures," "The Many-Sidedness of Education," "Instructional Effectiveness of Sound Film Elements," "Implementing Education with the Motion Picture," "A Content Evaluation of Motion Pictures in Elementary Science," "The Visual Radio Lesson in Elementary School," "When Sensory Aids Become Antidotes," "Looking Toward the Future." Among the speakers were Howard Gray, Director of Field Studies Erpi Classroom Films, Inc., New York; Arch A. Mercey, Assistant Director United States Film Service Washington, D.C.; William M. Gregory, Educational Museum Cleveland Public Schools; H. J. Leahy, Professor of Education, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh; John A. Hollinger, Director of Visualization, Pittsburgh Public Schools.

A copy of the proceedings of this Conference may be secured from Dr. James S. Kinder, Professor of Visual Education, Pennsylvania College for Women, Pittsburgh, for 15c.

The other is the Midwestern Forum on Visual Teaching Aids which was held in Chicago May 12th and 13th. Subjects discussed in the general sessions were: "New Film Sources and How to Get Information about Them," Fanning Hearon, Executive Director, Association of School Film Libra-

ries, New York City; "Evaluating Visual Materials for Specific Teaching Problems," Charles F. Hoban, Jr. American Council on Education Film Project; "Planning Educational Pictures," B. C. Arnsperger, Erpi Instructional Films; "Hollywood and Educational Pictures," Ralph Jester, Vice-President, American Pictures, Inc., formerly of Paramount Pictures; "How Can We Use Motion Pictures to Humanize Knowledge?," Edgar Dale, Ohio State University. There was a round table session with authorities from different universities and schools taking part and clinic sessions devoted to the elementary school, the high school and the college. The price of this printed proceeding is 50c and it can be secured from the office of Forum Chairman, Donald P. Bean, University of Chicago Press.

THE Visual Instruction Section of the New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education has been separately reprinted from the 1939 Yearbook of the Society. Programs during the past year presented many phases of experimentation and research in the production of visual aids and their use. Two subjects covered here were presented under the general topic "Building Morale with Visual Aids" at a joint meeting of the Mental Hygiene and Visual Instruction sections, with Dr. Frank Astor, who is Liason Officer between National Child Welfare Association and the Bureau of Child Guidance, Board of Education, and a member of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review, presiding. They are "The Contribution of the Motion Picture to Mental Hygiene" by Rita Hochheimer, Assistant Director of Visual Instruction, Board of Education of New York City, and "Building Morale Through an Assembly Program," by Mr. Morris Korovin and Mr. Louis Lewis, teachers in P. S. 89, Manhattan. Two experiments described are "The Theatrical Motion Picture as an Aid to the Teaching of Literature" by Sylvia Ryack, Scarborough School, N. Y., and "The Marionette" by Miss Emily Amson, reporting an experiment undertaken with several 16 millimeter motion pictures developed in marionette technique.

THE Audio-Visual Extension Service, Division of General Extension of the University of Georgia, has compiled a catalog of 16mm Educational Motion Picture Films. The Catalog states that all schools and colleges are invited to avail themselves of the advantages of this audio-visual extension service. The films are both sound and silent and are graded for various groups, elementary, junior or senior high school and college. The Catalog attractively printed and illustrated lists many films. Any communications relating to it or to the service may be addressed to: J. C. Wardlaw, Director, Division of General Extension, University of Georgia, Atlanta.

“MOTION Pictures in Physical Education” is the subject of a pamphlet by Professor Thurston Adams, Chairman of Division of Health and Physical Education, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida. It covers—The Place of the Motion Picture in Physical Education; Producing and Using the Experimental Films; Equipment for Taking and Projecting Motion Pictures; Suggestions for Using Motion Pictures. It is one of the Teachers College, Columbia University publications and the price is 90c.

THE American Civil Liberties Union annual report, bearing the title “The Bill of Rights 150 Years After—The Story of Civil Liberty 1938-1939” devotes several paragraphs to censorship, most of which during the year has concerned the motion picture.

“SELECTED BOOK-FILMS”

for

BOOK WEEK

(see page 19)

Fifty Years of the Motion Picture

THE motion picture is commemorating its fiftieth birthday this fall and invites all to take part in the celebration. So many important elements were combined in making the motion picture that it requires more than a one day birthday celebration, and so the entire season of 1939-40 is to be noted as Anniversary Year, but special emphasis is to be put on the week of October 1st-7th, as the first motion picture came into being October 6th, 1889.

Councils and other organizations may find it interesting to build one or more of their programs of the year around the history of the motion picture. Many of the suggestions for Motion Picture Week made in the March 1939 issue of this Magazine, tying up the various community interests will be applicable to the celebration. The theatre managers are certain to be observing this anniversary in various ways and will welcome co-operation in their activities and be glad to aid community groups.

If your organization plans to take any part in such a program we offer assistance in suggesting historical data and sources of material.

“REVIEW of Foreign Film Markets During 1938” is the title of a detailed report released by Nathan D. Golden, who is Chief of the Motion Picture Division, United States Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. Mr. Golden’s office receives regularly information on the motion picture situation in foreign countries and the compilation of this material into one volume at the end of the year gives a comprehensive picture of film activity over the world. It covers theatres, production, number of American films imported, censorship, educational developments and other film news of real interest to the motion picture student wanting facts and figures on films abroad. The 380 page volume is available at 25c from the United States Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

Selected Pictures' Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- f **MAN WHO DARED, THE**—Jane Bryan, Charley Grapewin. Based on story by Lucien Hubbard. Directed by Crane Wilbur. Dramatic story of a small-town family who get involved with a gang and are threatened with death if they don't keep their mouths shut. Has very outspoken sequences regarding gangsters and dictators generally, with a strong patriotic theme throughout. A noisy, sincere defense of democracy and the right to individual freedom. Warner Bros.
- f **MIRACLES FOR SALE**—Robert Young, Florence Rice, Henry Hull. Based on novel by Calyton Rawson. Directed by Tod Browning. A mystery tale, in an entertaining atmosphere of professional magicians with their trick paraphernalia. Its eeriness offset by amusing characters. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **NANCY DREW AND THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE**—Bonita Granville, Frankie Thomas, John Litel. Original screen story by Kenneth Gamet. Directed by William Clemens. Two youngsters solve an interesting mystery very amusingly. Warner Bros.
- m ***OLD MAID, THE**—Bette Davis, Miriam Hopkins, George Brent. Based on novel by Edith Wharton. Directed by Edmund Goulding. A story of New York in the middle of the last century, its manners and morals, revolving around the relations of two cousins toward each other and toward the child of the unmarried one. Dramatic in its psychology, and produced and acted with unusual sympathy for its unusual situations. Warner Bros. See page 13.
- f **RIDERS OF THE FRONTIER**—Tex Ritter. Original screen story by Jesse Duffey and Joseph Levering. Directed by Spencer Gordon Bennett. A straight Western, but one that shows far more imagination in treatment and situations than the average. Has some good songs and a camera that makes the most of fine scenery. Monogram.
- f ***STANLEY AND LIVINGSTONE**—Spencer Tracy, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Nancy Kelly. Original screen story by Philip Dunne and Julien Josephson. Directed by Henry King. An impressive record of Henry M. Stanley's expedition into darkest Africa to find out whether the famous explorer and missionary, David Livingstone, was dead or not; an expedition with tremendous historical consequences. Spencer Tracy embodies the reporter who became an explorer with splendid vitality, and the whole production is restrained and powerful. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox. See page 12.
- f **STAR MAKER, THE**—Bing Crosby, Louise Campbell, Linda Ware, Ned Sparks. Original screen story by Arthur Caesar and William A. Pierce. Directed by Roy del Ruth. Suggested by the career of Gus Edwards, this film shows Bing in the role of a showman who organized kid-shows throughout the continent and the trials and pleasures that accompany them. Though the story is poor there are some swell song-and-dance acts well handled by Bing and a number of very amusing characters and situations. Paramount.
- f **THESE GLAMOUR GIRLS**—Lew Ayres, Lana Turner, Tom Brown. From the Cosmopolitan Magazine Story by Jane Hall. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. A bright, even giddy, story of a college house-party and a pretty taxi-dancer who attends by mistake, with resultant conflicts with snobbery. Several interesting types are sketched in with a good deal of vividness, and a certain side of college life lively presented. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **TORCHY PLAYS WITH DYNAMITE**—Jane Wyman, Allen Jenkins, Tom Kennedy. Based on story by Scott Littleton. Directed by Noel Smith. A lively and amusing "Torchy" story in which she pretends to be a crook and goes off with a dangerous gang in order to expose their leader. Allen Jenkins and Tom Kennedy provide a great deal of fun in their detective roles. Warner Bros.
- fj **UNDER-PUP, THE**—Gloria Jean, Robert Cummings, Nan Grey, C. Aubrey Smith. Original screen story by I. A. R. Wylie. Directed by Richard Wallace. A cheerful story, elaborately cast and produced, launching a new little girl, a sort of combination of Deanna Durbin and Jane Withers, who, as a singing tomboy from the slums, reforms all the snooty people in an exclusive summer camp. Everything in it for popular consumption. Universal.
- m **WHEN TOMORROW COMES**—Charles Boyer, Irene Dunne. Original screen story by James M. Cain. Directed by John M. Stahl. These two stars give us another poignant romance. He a renowned pianist, she a waitress wanting to be a singer, meet, fall in love and must part in three days. Boyer's is the kind of understanding performance such a part needs and everything else about the picture is in keeping. Univ.
- fj ***WIZARD OF OZ, THE**—Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Bert Lahr, Ray Bolger. From the book by L. Frank Baum. Directed by Victor Fleming. The fantastic adventures of a girl named Dorothy in the Land of Oz, with The Scarecrow, The Tin Man and The Cowardly Lion, where she learned there was no place like home. With its color and special effects it makes an elaborate fairy-tale. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m WOMEN, THE—Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell. From the play by Clare Boothe. Directed by George Cukor. The story of a marriage that was broken up and put together again, played entirely by women. A brilliant cast of actresses portray innumerable characters mostly of the Park Avenue cat variety, though the brittle quality of the play from which the film was made is liberally softened by sentiment. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Informationals

- fj *ARABIAN BAZAAR (World Windows)—Carefully selected and beautifully photographed scenes of an Arabian city. Done in color. United Artists.
- fj *BILL OF RIGHTS, THE (Historical Technicolor Featurettes)—Excellent historical film of early America in color. Vitaphone.
- fj BIRTHPLACE OF ICEBERGS—A selection from Father Hubbard's adventures and researches in Alaska and his findings about how icebergs get started. 20th Century-Fox.
- f BREAKING THE NEWS (Paragraphic)—Ted Husing describes the many varied entertainments of Madison Square Garden. Paramount.
- fj CONQUERING THE COLORADO (Adventures of the Newsreel Cameraman)—The extremely dangerous, eleven-hundred-mile trip made by one man in his boat through the perilous rapids of the Colorado River. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj *EVERGREEN EMPIRE, THE (Magic Carpet Series)—Beautifully photographed scenes from the State of Washington. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GUN PLAY (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—How clay-pigeon shooting trains for hunting. RKO Radio.
- f HYDRO MANIACS (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Crazy hydroplane races in Florida. Para.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE—A pictorial exhibition of the famous radio program in operation with Mr. Fadiman and the most frequent "experts"—F.P.A., John Kieran and Oscar Levant—answering the questions. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 13, THE (series 5)—"Metropolis 1939"—A highly interesting survey of New York City, its people and its achievements, with special emphasis on the growing public safety created by the present Police Department.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED NO. 6—How playing cards are made; the new San Francisco Bridge, etc. Vitaphone.
- f ONE DAY STAND (Vitaphone Varieties)—How a circus arrives, sets itself up and moves on. Vitaphone.
- f PACK TRIP (Reelism)—Dude ranchers on the trail. RKO Radio.
- f ROMANCE IN COLOR (Technicolor Specials)—An interesting melange of well-known paintings, mostly about love, with flowery commentary. Vitaphone.
- fj SOJOURN IN INDIA (Columbia Tour)—Colorful pictures of Bombay and Calcutta. Columbia.
- f TAKE A CUE (Pete Smith specialty)—Charles Peterson showing how difficult billiard shots are made. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f BOY MEETS JOY (Mentone Musical Comedy)—Pinky Tomlin—Those from six to sixty, sing, dance and play with Pinky Tomlin's orchestra. Universal.
- fj DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (Serial) NOS. 1-2—Ralph Byrd. Original screenplay by Barry Shipman, Ronald Davidson and Walter Miller. Directed by William Witney and John English. Tracy's troubles begin when his world famous prisoner escapes the death house and begins to carry out his devilish plans for international sabotage. Republic.

f VERGE OF DISASTER (Floyd Gibbons', "Your True Adventure")—A cottage nearly carried over a cliff. Vitaphone.

Cartoons and Comedies

- fj ANDY PANDA—A laughable new cartoon character, with some amusing vocal burlesque in the other characters. Universal.
- fj AUTO ANTICS—Our Gang—The Gang wins an auto race to save a stray dog. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f AUTOGRAPH HOUND (Walt Disney)—Donald Duck invades a Hollywood studio. RKO Radio.
- f DETOURING AMERICA (Merrie Melody)—An amusing burlesque of travelogues in cartoon form. Vitaphone.
- fj OFFICER DUCK (Walt Disney)—Donald adopts an infant's disguise to round up a tough public enemy. RKO Radio.

Selected Book-Films

THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures has compiled its annual "Selected Book-Films," listing the films from October 1938 to October 1939 which have been adapted from novels and published plays, and those with special book value tie-up. The Board has prepared this list each year since 1922 in connection with the fall observance of Book Week. "Books Around the World" is the slogan for 1939 Book Week, November 12th-18th, and this list appropriately includes films around the world—British, French, Italian, Swedish, etc., in addition to the many American films, which from their book source, or their relation to reading, receive special attention from libraries, schools, motion picture councils and clubs interested in stressing the study of the motion picture. The list is priced at 10c and is available from the National Board of Review.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW
70 Fifth Avenue,
New York City

I enclose 10c for Selected Book-Films.

Name

Address

Other publications and details of 1939 BOOK WEEK plan can be secured from Book Week Headquarters, 62 West 45th St., New York City.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c

Special Film Lists10c ea.
Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils10c

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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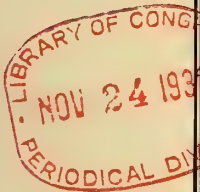
Jean Gabin and Michele Morgan in "Port of Shadows" (see page 15)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

m *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT—Lew Ayres, Louis Wolheim, John Wray, Slim Summerville. Based on novel by Erich Maria Remarque. Directed by Lewis Milestone. Re-issue of Lewis Milestone's famous picture to which has been added a commentary and a number of stock shots and newsreel items of pre-war and post-war Germany. Result gives the picture a strong topical appeal, sympathetic towards the Germans as people but strongly anti-Nazi and anti-militaristic. (Reviewed in Exceptional Photoplays Department, May, 1930, Magazine). Universal.

f AT THE CIRCUS—Marx Brothers, Kenny Baker, Florence Rice. Original screen story by Irving Brecher. Directed by Edward Buzzell. Harpo on the harp, Chico at the piano and Groucho leading the hilarious nonsense as always. When ways and means are wanted for raising money for the trembling circus, each brother in there to help in his own incredible way. A highly amusing picture, occasionally weak in lines and situations but generally most enjoyable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj *BABES IN ARMS—Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Charles Winniger. Based on the play by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. Directed by Busby Berkeley. An excellent musical show about show business, in which the younger generation step in to take the places of their parents who have been driven out of vaudeville by the movies—lively, amusing and sometimes touching, with Mickey Rooney showing a remarkable versatility. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f CALL A MESSENGER—Billy Halop, Huntz Hall, Little Tough Guys. Original screen story by Sally Sandlin and Michael Kraike. Directed by Arthur Lubin. Well-developed story of a tough bunch of street kids who are persuaded to try doing a bit of work for a change and finally succeed in getting rid of a gang of bank-busters. Has humor and feeling. Universal.

f CHARLIE CHAN AT TREASURE ISLAND—Sidney Toler, Cesar Romero. Original screen story by John Larkin. Directed by Norman Foster. An interesting mystery, laid at the San Francisco Fair and involving psychic elements, real and fake. 20th Century-Fox.

f DANCING CO-ED—Lana Turner, Richard Carlson, Leon Errol. Original screen story by Albert Treynor. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. A gay, briskly moving comedy about a scheme to plant a professional dancer in a college to win a movie contest. Full of youth and good spirits, with Artie Shaw's band to provide the swing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f DISPUTED PASSAGE—John Howard, Akim Tamiroff, Dorothy Lamour. Based on novel by Lloyd C. Douglas. Directed by Frank Borzage. A story of science versus spiritual values, with a brilliant young surgeon who follows the teachings of an older man till a girl convinces him soul and science can go together. Well directed, some excellent performances, and a stirring climax in war-torn China. Paramount.

f EL CORSARO NERO (The Black Pirate)—Ciro Verratti, Silvana Jachino. Based on novel by Emilio Salgari. Directed by Pelrmi Amleto. A dashing picture in the Douglas Fairbanks tradition. The hero sets out to kill the traitor who has dishonored and murdered his brother, and roams the seas as a pirate searching for him. Complications begin when he captures and falls in love with a lady who turns out to be the daughter of his hated enemy. Choppy in parts, but colorful and exciting. (Italian production). Esperia.

f ESCAPE, THE—Kane Richmond, Edward Norris, Amanda Duff. Original screen story by Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Directed by Ricardo Cortez. A story of two boys, one growing up to be a policeman, the other a gangster, and how their lives affected the lives of kids in their neighborhood. 20th Century-Fox.

f ESPIONAGE AGENT—Joel McCrea, Brenda Marshall. Original screen story by Robert Henry Buckner. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. A melodrama about a young diplomat whose wife is involved in a foreign spy ring, rather exciting, smoothly done, with home preparedness against espionage as its theme. Warner Bros.

(Continued on page 20)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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What Is a Good Movie ?

Last month the Editors decided to open their columns to the question: "What Is a Good Movie?", and asked members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays to write brief replies. We publish below the first of their answers; the remainder will follow next month. We would welcome personal comment and criticism regarding these members' opinions from readers of the Magazine for inclusion in our Correspondence Columns.

Mr. J. K. Paulding,
Chairman of the Committee
on Exceptional Photoplays

ASSUMING the fundamental requisites of good photography, good direction, and good acting, it depends upon the objective sought and the skill with which that objective is approached.

The most universal of objectives is entertainment, but this will not make a good movie if it is arrived at in a haphazard fashion, without regard for the unity of effect.

Entertainment is of many sorts, ranging from the farcical to the tragic, and each sort requires a tempo of its own. It is hard to think of an effective farce in which the tempo drags, but easy to imagine a tragedy running swiftly to its pre-destined climax.

Is the subject of the essence of a good movie? I am inclined to think not. Technique is of more importance in producing the unity of mood upon which the final effect will depend. Yet a stirring subject—

especially one linked to man's consciousness of his destiny and the problems immediately confronting him—if treated with equal technical efficiency may well be preferred to one of more trivial content.

Which is only to say that the movie, regarded as an art, is subject to the conditions controlling the other arts. Some, no doubt, may still be found to deny it the status of an art at all. Well, what is it then? Just one of the new "methods of communication"? From this point of view it must be judged by its effectiveness in spreading information—even propaganda. But even in this field art plays its part, since the best propaganda is frequently that in which the intention is most successfully concealed.

Admitting, however, the justness of its pretensions to be considered one of the arts, the best movie will be the one that best exemplifies those particular characteristics that differentiate the movie from other forms of art. Of these characteristics the *kinetic* quality is the most salient with its implied capacities for rapid extension into realms for the most part inaccessible to the drama and the static arts. The technical equipment necessary to the realization of this quality is, therefore, the ingredient most needed in the production of the perfect movie, while never, of course, excluding those human attributes of imagination and sympathy without which it will fail to reach its goal.

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures Annual Conference, February 1st-3rd, 1940
Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City

Mr. Henry Hart

A poem or jewel from the tomb of Tutankhamen speaks eloquently still, but a motion picture of ten years ago is grotesque.

Why?

By answering this question I think it possible to enunciate an adequate definition of a good motion picture.

The superficial part of the answer concerns the physical part of the motion picture—the film. Its chemical composition, the photographic skills and processes entailed in imposing an image on it, and the physics of light and sound involved in the subsequent transmission to the screen, depend today upon theoretical knowledge and mechanical devices which are clumsy and infantile. In short, the physical substances and tools of the motion picture are rudimentary. Improvements and refinements come thick and fast. Today's maximum achievement is tomorrow's crudity.

In acknowledging this, however, we have stated only part of the reason why a ten-year-old motion picture is grotesque. We have not approached the heart of the problem of what constitutes a good motion picture. The core of the problem is in the realm of esthetics, and is the heart of all forms of art.

Before making observations about the nature of art in general and of motion picture art in particular (which in its televised phase will become the greatest of all art forms), it is necessary to recognize that many different kinds of craftsmanship are employed in the creation of a motion picture. The theatre is the mistress of four artists: the motion picture of six. Author, actor, director, photographer, scenic designer and composer—working harmoniously or antagonistically, stupidly or intelligently—create that portion of a motion picture which is not the physical film itself. In other words, the motion picture is a *collective* art form, and as such entails problems absent from the labor of a solitary painter working upon a single canvas.

Hokusai, at the age of ninety, said that could he live another ten years he might achieve a perfect line. If the individual artist is an apprentice at the end of his life

—and he is—a group of artists working collectively face problems of which they are not even aware. Especially in an epoch in which collective enterprise is so new. The art *in* a collective art form is still to be learned, and as it is learned a more adequate conception of a good motion picture will emerge.

But the real crux of the matter lies beneath even this. Let us assume that the various artists involved—the author, actor et al—are all men of talent and are learning to work harmoniously and with mutual inspiration. Upon what are their efforts to be expended? Upon ideas, arranged in a pattern—that is, upon a closed system of ideas, to borrow a concept from physics? What kind of ideas, what kind of a totality of ideas? It is here that we approach the basic considerations of what constitutes a good motion picture. And any work of art.

"Universal ideas" are those which are comprehensible to all men in all times and places. They are the distillate of much living and dying, they are the substance and structure of the funded experience of the race. And, I would suggest, of art. To be an artist is to be possessed of them. They are the essential ingredient, the *sine qua non*, of any work of art. In fact, a work of art is their exemplification, and exemplifying them, and applying them, is art. They may be deployed as tragedy or comedy, for entertainment or instruction, according to rules first formulated by Aristotle. But without them an intended tragedy is comic, and a purported comedy tragic.

A good motion picture, then, is one in which the subject matter—which can be anything whatsoever—is treated in terms of universal ideas, by craftsmen who know what these ideas are, and who know the most about the art of collectively creating a collective work of art, and who utilize each technological improvement in the substances and tools of the physical part of a motion picture.

Mr. John McAndrew

I think a good picture is one that makes you believe what it asks that you believe, convincingly and absorbingly. Unfortunately, the answer, like the question,

is one of those many-faceted things that just won't be nailed down and ultimately resolves itself into a lovely poser like how long is *Indian Summer*? and Rudolf Friml's music is better than Irving Berlin's, but can you prove it?

So many basic components go to make a good film—and you can't expect any one picture to achieve all of them; it must, however, have a few, one or two of which, refreshingly handled, may turn the trick.

The film in its most completely cinematic form was expressed by Pare Lorentz in *The River*: elemental things that are a part of time in its flight and that simply couldn't be caught by anything but a camera—in close-up, raindrops plopping on green leaves and glistening on stalks of grass and forming ever-widening circles on a luminous pond; the plow cleaving the sweet fresh earth and the plowman on the hilltop silhouetted against a twilight sky. And the visualized thought of a Hitchcock thriller—in *A Woman Alone*, the close-up of a knife cutting bread, hesitation, a tilt to the girl's furtive face, back to the knife, her hand changing to a firmer, more sinister grip, and pan to the man's eyes comprehending her subconscious intent. Again, the rhythmic cutting in a musical, as in *Chu Chin Chow*, to blend all movement to the music and the dance. These things are exclusively filmic and closer to perfection than you can too often expect.

The director is generally the one responsible for what you get. "Generally," because in too many of our films he is nothing but a sort of stop-gap between the set-up and the take, with little opportunity to give character and scope. Occasionally—and surprisingly often to-day—out of the ashes rises a *Let Us Live* or a *Blind Alley* and the movie-makers hope they have hit a gusher, somebody with creative ability, perhaps even style, who, with better material, fuller rein and less "collaboration" might be a potential Lubitsch or Hitchcock or King Vidor or Capra. From this melting-pot have risen Garson Kanin, Charles Vidor, John Brahm, John Farrow and George Stevens to challenge to-morrow.

Some "name" directors who do not or cannot realize the full cinematic value in

their productions do nevertheless manage to substitute a highly competent stage effectiveness which, together with proper atmosphere and an intimacy no stage could supply, can make the vehicle almost inadvertently good and even exceptional, such as *Emile Zola* and *Night Must Fall*. At the other extreme, the inherent banality and the Brand of the B's was completely removed from *Let Us Live* by strikingly original use of camera, development of character and judicious, expert cutting.

Of course, there are pictures and pictures . . . a dizzying array of types—the super-colossals and Z-minuses; the same yardstick would never do for *Snow White*, *The March of Time*, *The Blood of a Poet* and *Gone With the Wind*—a North, South, East and West that defy you to logically classify anything at all. Nevertheless, somewhere in the melée between the Stupendous A's and the mile-a-minute-B's is the Never-Never Land where good pictures are made.

Simplicity, intimacy and authenticity seem the prime requisites of a good film.

Simplicity was never more genuinely exemplified than in *Sing You Sinners*, which really is a classic of Americana par excellence. Its true merit, perhaps, can be estimated only by a comparison to the extravagant situations and bizarre character studies offered in other "family" films in general and the insistent caricatures of Mickey Rooney and the infantile colloquialisms of our *Four Daughters Courageous* in particular.

A warm intimacy seldom found on the screen was realized between Charles Boyer and Irene Dunne in *Love Affair* and it was probably this quality alone which transported it from the synthetically sophisticated, which the deliberately blind insisted upon calling it, into the realm of a love idyll.

The minutest authenticity of detail necessary to a war-torn village in 1915 Belgium was observed in *I Was a Spy*, and this strict adherence to setting and characters *sans* glamour was not a little responsible for its being possibly the finest spy film and certainly one of the foremost war documents ever screened. In it, for instance, Madeleine Carroll wore exact 1915 period costumes of singular ugliness that no domestic

star would consider or her designer permit—even to a baggy, sackcloth prison gown with all the line and finish of a potato sack, her hair pinned straight back in a tight, uncompromising knot. Yet out of this frame shone a vivid, cameo-clear beauty that Hollywood has long since shellacked into one more gilded lily.

The theme should determine the directorial treatment, and each film should conform to the fundamental requirements of its type: Mystery and adventure stories and character studies should lean toward the Hitchcock technique, employing a camera that roves every nook and cranny and follows people along dim corridors and up musty staircases, bringing you up short and shuddering with terrific impact into the leering face of death, feeling with you the crash of the hatchet into the skull and black oblivion.

American comedies are quite good, Hollywood having been weaned on them, but strangely enough comedy relief is positively poisonous. Since it is supposed to relieve, it should bear a much closer resemblance to everyday life than an out-and-out farce, but no producer has yet discovered that there are no mental counterparts of Warren Hymer, Ed. Brophy or Wallace Beery on the loose in our police force, family circles or even chain gangs. They are thoroughly obnoxious because they masquerade as realism and have no counterpart in fiction or fact.

Slapstick comedy, which should have an intellectual renaissance for my money, would do well to employ the Keaton approach, and sophisticated fun shouldn't be dependent upon searing bon mots tossed relentlessly like red hot rivets from Punch and Judy and which no one dares drop. Riding this tiger ruthlessly were *Three Men on a Horse*, *Boy Meets Girl* and *Fifth Ave. Girl*, with everyone brilliantly outwitting everyone else, themselves and their audience. Satire must be deft and devastating, in the manner of *Pygmalion* and *Carnival in Flanders* and unlike the heavy-handedness that made *Idiot's Delight* a fantastic bore. Screwball families should take after the Rimpelgars of *Three Cornered Moon* and the Kilborns of *Merrily We Live*, who were

uproariously funny for being casually insane, not laboring fiendishly at it as they all did in those just mentioned and *A Slight Case of Murder* and *It's Love I'm After* and some of those Twentieth-Century Fox things tailored to the talents of Loretta Young, Don Ameche and Tyrone Power. If it unfolds as merely preposterous, it has not been properly done.

Why screen histories should invariably be a Waterloo I don't know, because they needn't be, but more casualties occur in them than on their gigantic battlefields. For one thing, the producer is usually completely overawed by the dignity of his canvas and at the outset weaves around his hero and heroine a spell of stupefying nobility never known this side of the river Styx and which history thoughtlessly omitted, harking back to the heyday of Griffith and Gish in its wanton innocence. As a result, all our Washingtons, Lincolns, Victorias, Napoleons and Wellingtons are propelled through their parts on an invisible dais as if in an embalmed state they had been resurrected to roam the world and review their martyrdom in retrospect. Each succeeding page of the past, it seems, must dwarf in lavishness all that has gone before; throw the characters to the lions, but surpass tenfold the original splendor of the French Court, the Roman Empire, the fripperies of the silk-swathed simpletons and Satans that Schildkraut elaborated so sneeringly. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Conquest*, *Suez* and others of the genre were such dazzling cascades of priceless baubles that the light of mere life blew out, leaving only the overstuffed richness that produced an enervating nausea.

A document with a social message must deliver it honestly and forcefully and, more often than not, take sides. It is difficult to present both sides impartially and withal remain a rose between two thorns.

Blockade threw a mystifying smoke screen around itself, pulled all its punches and reverted to a watery romance each time it seemed to be getting off to another start; it had the added misfortune of the same sort of wooden handling that crippled *Juarez* and wound up in a dense fog, a masterpiece of evasion. If Mr. Wanger had even

an inkling of the half-truth he was ultimately going to have, he might have spared us in the first place. I would like to admire his initiative in exploring fresh fields, but considering the results. . . .

Almost an object lesson to *Blockade* is *Professor Mamlock*, which is emphatically everything *Blockade* is not—a smashing indictment in every sense of the word.

Atmosphere is invaluable in effecting the right mood, giving substance to the shadow; decay and death permeated every foot of *Payment Deferred*; a gossamer, dreamy quality gave spiritual beauty to the fourth-dimensional *Peter Ibbetson*, and without haloes or heavenly choruses the Stranger in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* was God.

These were fine examples of good pictures that weren't too clever for their own good or too big for their frame, in which the humor was never labored and pathos never degenerated to bathos.

Some day, out Hollywood way, they'll get around to having all of these things in one picture as an antidote to the double feature. When they do—well, just duck, comrade, duck!

Dr. Russell Potter,
Division of Film Study,
Columbia University.

TO define a good movie is almost as difficult as to define a good novel, or a good statue, or a good stage play. I have seen hundreds of good movies, and many more bad ones. I think I know a good movie when I see it; but I cannot tell you what a good movie is!

One reason for this state of things is, of course, the fact that the motion picture is a living art-form—and one that is exuberantly living at that! Just as you get your hands on it to have a good look at it, *zip*—and it is out of reach again and you are once more chasing it!

But you want a definition, and not a discourse; so here is my go at one:

A good movie is one in which a story is told in terms of what Alfred Hitchcock has called *visual sequences* and with rigid attention to that basic double-barreled law of all truly artistic creation, *economy of means*

and *economy of attention*. (Note: the story may be the factual or semi-factual scenario of a documentary, an enlarged fairy tale like *Snow White*, a fully documented biography like *Zola*, a case history in sociology like *I Am a Fugitive*, an inconsequential and unimportant piece of fiction like *It Happened One Night* or *Carnival in Flanders*.) The important thing, of course, is the *cinematic* . . . the movement itself. Recognition of this is what makes a good movie; failure to recognize it is what makes merely another illustrated story. For the principle of visual sequence is not that of narrative sequence or of dramatic sequence. Indeed, it may be very different from any logical sequence that we can think of. For it is something new in the world, something so new that we are now only learning its a-b-c's.

Now, for the first time in history, the creative artist is complete master of both *time* and *space*. The motion picture has given him a new idiom, that of *visual sequence*.

A New Quarterly

THIS month will be published the first number of a new magazine, "FILMS —A Quarterly of Discussion and Analysis," in which the publishers offer an independent forum for an exchange of film ideas, wherein they hope to direct film theory and film criticism toward the living needs of the film. Their preliminary announcement says: "FILMS will be issued four times a year, in a distinguished format. Every aspect of cinema work will be reported and analyzed, providing material of vital interest to both the professional filmmaker and the layman. Substantial articles by well-known technicians of the industry will be complemented by authoritative studies from critics in parallel fields of the fine arts, economics, science and sociology. Letters from American and European film centers will provide a quarterly record of current thought and activity in the international film.

"The main purpose of this forum will be to aid the film-maker in studying his public,

(Continued on page 17)

Writing and the Motion Picture

By FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON

Mrs. Patterson is Instructor in Photoplay Composition at Columbia University and a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board. She is the author of several books and numerous articles on screen writing. This article is from a radio address delivered over Station WNYC on the Board's Film Forum.

WHEN it comes to the question of writing and instruction in writing for the screen there are always people who assure me that as the majority of screen-plays are adapted from novels and stage-plays there is no point in training writers specially for the screen. But I firmly believe that the answer to the plea for better pictures is to be found in the development of a race of screen writers, of people who are trained to think and write in terms of pictures and who recognize the screen as a medium entirely independent of, and different to the short story, the novel and the stage-play. The more we develop these pictorially minded people, the less the screen will have to borrow from best-sellers and Broadway hits.

I might go so far as to say that probably the greatest single factor that has kept the screen from reaching a still higher development is this reliance of producers on material that has been conceived in a literary, rather than pictorial, form. After all, can we argue that a story written to be *read* should be suitable as a story that is not read but *photographed*?

It is interesting to note that in the film fields in which the screen has shown its greatest brilliance—comedy and biography—the makers have not bothered with stage-plays and books, but have worked up the material from the outset in pictorial form. Producers, of course, say that there is enormous publicity value in using well-known books and plays. Yet some of the outstanding screen successes, such as *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, *The Life of Emile Zola*, *The Big Parade*, and all the Chaplin films, were composed in screen language without benefit of Broadway or the publishing houses. And this

screen language is the language we are trying to teach at Columbia.

But as long as adaptation exists the movie companies must retain a corps of writers who treat books and plays for filming. These writers have to have the pictorial slant that the novelist or dramatist lacked in the first instance. They are put under contract, and they are most important to an industry that depends on having so much of its material done over. At Columbia we train students to make these screen treatments, to do what corresponds in newspaper work to a re-write job.

I am often asked why the screen is so willing to borrow its material from fiction and the stage. Almost never do novelists and playwrights use material that has already appeared in screen form. I think the answer is mainly a technical one. The technical side of the screen has developed more rapidly than its creative abilities. It is as though you had a factory all set up and ready for the making of soup—let us say vegetable soup. But you cannot make vegetable soup without a long preparation. Someone has to hoe the beans and weed the beets and water the carrots. Someone in China has to plant the rice, perhaps a year in advance. And someone else out on a ranch has to raise the cattle to furnish the stock. Then, of course, there's the can.

The same need for long preparation exists in writing the screen story. All creative writing is a long process. Ask any novelist, and he will tell you that he didn't dash off his novel in six weeks. He thought about it and brooded over it. It is more likely to have taken him six years.

Nor are time and thought the only important elements in the creation of the story. Our current authors are the result of the long training in writing English, and the long study of the best literary examples, that our grade schools, colleges and universities provide. The average

person is taught to write a composition almost as soon as he can hold a pencil in his hand. He is encouraged to tell stories, to express himself in the medium of words.

Even after this long training, however, there are still many people who can't use language to tell a story. They are the "cannots". Once out of school they no longer try to write compositions. But the "cans" ultimately arrive at a publishing house, or at the office of a Broadway producer, with a manuscript under their arms. The publisher or stage producer has the pick of the talent that results from the efforts of all the teachers in schools and colleges, plus the long hours of studying literature and the creative effort on the part of the budding author who tries to put into practice what he is taught in the class-room. For the moving picture, however, there has been no such preparation. Production facilities supplied a brand-new set-up for telling stories, but they couldn't be allowed to lie idle for six years, or even six months, while an author developed a series of pictures that would best tell his story. They had to have a story right away, so that the cameras could start grinding next day. The simplest procedure was to buy a story already written, and this is what was done. The producers fell back on literary material, and having once started to use it they continued the practice. Precedent is a strong thing.

The schools go right on teaching people to write in terms of words. They can't teach them to write in terms of pictures because they don't know how to do it themselves. The film companies *do* know, but they won't teach. There are several reasons for this. First, the companies have very little time. It is a tremendous task to produce pictures to meet release dates, without stopping on the way to show people how it is done. In the second place, those who could do the teaching are too high priced to spend time on amateurs who may or may not turn out to be screen geniuses. A director who gets three thousand dollars a week and is in the middle of a million

dollar production isn't going to take time out to show a writer that his stuff is too psychological; that he should let his characters reveal themselves by what they do, and not describe them. The same is true of all the other studio experts working at white heat. The scenario writer is hard pressed because there are stars under contract and their salaries are adding huge sums to the overhead as long as they are waiting for suitable stories. But he is paid a high salary to *find* a ready-made story, not to teach someone to write one.

The tempo of the motion picture industry is not geared to teaching, and it is too expensively operated. In a school or college the best minds have all the time in the world to teach. Nor is it a matter of being paid three thousand dollars a week; it is more apt to be three thousand dollars a year.

The motion picture has yet to develop its William Lyon Phelps, its George Pierce Baker, its Charles Copeland, devoting themselves to the task of inspiring people to appreciate the best that has been done on the screen and to try to emulate that best in original compositions.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer once inaugurated a training school for young writers, just as Paramount did for young actors, but for various reasons the project was abandoned. One of the reasons was that the results were not quick enough. But although few people in the industry can stop to teach others, they themselves "learn by doing". That is why the number of stories written and developed within the industry is increasing. The director-author combination is especially noticeable. King Vidor, Rene Clair, Eisenstein, Chaplin, Lubitsch, John Ford, have all had their fling at originals.

When I was in Hollywood last summer I was interested to see how much attention the Disney Studios gave to discovering and encouraging new talent. They have regular set times when artists may come with their portfolios of drawings and have a personnel expert go over their work. These artists are by no means people who have won places for them-

selves in the art world. As a matter of fact the studio doesn't want them to be successes. It wants to train their talents along the special line of animation, and it realizes that this can best be done before the talent has had a chance to crystallize in a certain mold.

What applies to drawing applies equally to writing. It might be well if some of the companies would follow Disney's procedure of being hospitable to new talent and giving young authors a chance to learn to create stories in terms of the camera. It is a well-known fact that many of the famous authors who are put under contract to write for the screen prove to be flat failures when it comes to composing in terms of pictures. They simply can't do it. And, after all, why should they be able to? They have skilled themselves in an entirely different field. While the screen play has elements of plot and character in common with the novel and the stage play, it presents them by entirely different means.

Sometimes eight or ten authors of established reputation will work at princely salaries to re-write a novel or play that cost a fortune to buy in the beginning. The more these authors work on it, the farther the script gets from the purchased material. The authors might just as well have created an original story at the outset. The picture *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* only remotely resembled Clarence Budington Kelland's story "Opera Hat."

One of the great wastes, as I see it, is that these writers usually are put under contract for work on a single story. When the script is finished—or rather, when their version of it is finished—they return home to go on with their usual vocations—writing novels or stage plays. Whatever they may have learned about the screen in the course of their assignment is lost to the film company. Few eminent authors on special assignments stay to become staff writers.

Some new system is needed to supplement the present set-up. Perhaps a system corresponding to the Guggenheim Fellowships, or to the advance royalties system of the publishing houses. A young

writer, of whose talent a company is convinced, might become a sort of apprentice to the studio, drawing a salary while he studies the technique and applies it to his story. The salaries purported to have been paid on discarded versions of *The Good Earth*, would support a group of promising young apprentices for several years.

Let's Go to the Movies. By William Clayton Pryor and Helen Sloman Pryor. Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$2.50. Illustrated.

THIS is by no means the first book by W. C. and H. S. Pryor; they have written brief, instructional works on a dozen subjects, ranging from trains to cowboys. Their method is to break down their subject into its component parts and spend a chapter discussing and explaining the function of each, occasionally stopping for criticism or to warn the reader to be on his guard.

Let's Go to the Movies begins by attempting to show the young reader that the movies are not just a scramble of favorite stars, and that a proper understanding of what goes into them is likely to increase his appreciation. We are then taken to an imaginary movie-house in time for the newsreel, and take off a chapter to discuss its making. Then comes the feature, and with it begins the body of the book—story, direction, camera-work, acting, sound, editing, costuming, sets, etc., each carefully explained and fitted into its place as part of the completed picture. Frequent excursions to the Hollywood studios are made whenever a studio background is helpful in explaining points. Following on this come surveys of other aspects of the movies, such as the star system, block-bookings, shorts versus double feature, and censorship (the National Board of Review is *not* a producers' censorship organization, Messrs. Pryor!) and a final warning to audiences that it is their duty to interest themselves actively and critically in Hollywood productions. Well illustrated and sensibly written, this is a most useful book for the young student of the movies, who will find its style and comments both entertaining and instructive.

N. D.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Ninotchka

Screen play by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder and Walter Reisch, from an original story by Melchior Lengyel, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, director of photography William Daniels, musical score by Werner R. Heymann. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

<i>Ninotchka</i>	<i>Greta Garbo</i>
<i>Leon</i>	<i>Melvyn Douglas</i>
<i>Svana</i>	<i>Ina Claire</i>
<i>Iranoff</i>	<i>Sig Rumann</i>
<i>Buljanoff</i>	<i>Felix Bressart</i>
<i>Kopalski</i>	<i>Alexander Granach</i>
<i>Razin</i>	<i>Bela Lugosi</i>
<i>Rakonin</i>	<i>Gregory Gaye</i>
<i>Hotel manager</i>	<i>Rolfe Sedan</i>
<i>Mercier</i>	<i>Edwin Maxwell</i>
<i>Gaston</i>	<i>Richard Carle</i>

WITH so many winds of controversy tangling maelstrom-like wherever people are reacting to world events, this gay zephyr of a picture is likely to be taken in some quarters for something more significant than seems to have been intended, something perhaps laden with a message—and a subtly malicious one at that. It treats lightly a subject that some can contemplate only with the utmost seriousness, serious sympathy or serious repugnance: Soviet Russia. To such seriousness, such light treatment is like making jokes about religion. To most people, however, *Ninotchka* will be what on the surface it appears to be, a comedy in which—to put it at its crudest—Garbo laughs.

What Garbo means as a box-office asset, as exploited to attract the mass audiences, is summed up pretty accurately by Lewis Jacobs thus: "the ultra-sophisticated, neurotic woman of the world who lives only for love." Dramas have been devised or adapted

to present her in that aspect, which is probably the best solution possible to the enormously difficult problem of how to make her special genius "glamorous" to the number of paying customers necessary to keep her on the screen in such expensive productions. But genuine caviar remains caviar, whatever it is labelled for the general, and whatever package it is sold in. And those who have admired Garbo for herself and not for what she was called or for the stories in which she has been presented, will not be astonished that she can laugh. To go no further back than *Camille* and *Conquest*, it has been obvious enough that there was something merry and simple in her waiting to express itself.

Ninotchka is a girl who is the precise opposite of sophisticated and neurotic, or living only for love. She is sincere, straightforward and honest, completely sensible about love whether it is romantic love or love for her fellow-man, and never solemn or pompous about anything, be it love or omelets or hats. She is capable enough to be chosen by Moscow for a mission to Paris, wise enough, though in her own world she has never met them before, to see through the fripperies and sophistications of Paris, human enough for her youth to blossom out in the enchanting air of Paris in springtime. Paris does not change her—it merely expands her; she has a good time and falls in love.

What happens is concerned with some jewels that had belonged to a Grand Duchess of the old regime, which had been sent to Paris to be turned into cash. The three men entrusted with the business were too simple to cope with the lures and wiles of



The Moscow dinner party scene in "Ninotchka"

the worldly capital, and the transaction hung fire. Moreover, the Grand Duchess was there, with a friend in the sly and charming person of Melvyn Douglas to help her recover her jewels from the naive bargainers from Moscow. So the incorruptible Ninotchka was sent to put an end to the nonsense and get things done. Business gets complicated with romance and intrigue, but in the end the simple maid from Moscow has her triumph over the slick duchess.

Probably nobody but Ernst Lubitsch could have directed this sort of comedy so lightly and skillfully. He has never in all his years of directing done anything better. His unique and clever way of handling an incident in fresh visual terms, his cinematic tropes which with loftier material would have to be called poetic (such as the masterly indirection by which he suggests the whole by showing only a part, as when we are made completely aware of what goes on behind the doors of the royal suite merely by seeing the servants in the hall outside)—this element of style

which has become commonly known as the "Lubitsch touch" has never flourished so richly before. Its richness comes from a sort of kindness that is new in Lubitsch. Certain coarsenesses hitherto characteristic are absent. With many temptations to be sharply satirical he has used barbs only on the Grand Duchess, and has told his story with the smiling genialty of someone telling an amusing joke on himself, not laughing at his subject but with it. Perhaps the whole key to his attitude is to be found in the little Moscow episode, where Ninotchka gives an omelet dinner in her overpopulated room to her three friends who have to bring their own eggs. The Russians themselves once made a comedy about the rooming situation in *Bed and Sofa*: they were not so human and gently humorous about it as Lubitsch has been.

But Lubitsch has never had Garbo for his central figure before, which may well explain everything. With her to irradiate his technical skill with a personal glow and meaning

the comedy becomes something more than deft showmanship. Among a most craftily chosen cast — Melvyn Douglas so smooth without ever over-doing it, Ina Claire so brightly capable, the three Moscow emissaries who are apparently doomed to be labeled the Three Karl Marx Brothers, and all the adroitly sketched-in minor people—Garbo keeps things warm and human, steadfast, with a gay and civilized spirit, to a simple ideal of human relationships, a lovable personality expressed through the lovely and effortless skill of a fine actress. Is she true to the Party Line? She is "wise and sweet and witty—let's not say dull things about her."

J. S. H.

(Rated Exceptional)

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

Screenplay by Sidney Brechman from a story by Lewis R. Foster. Directed by Frank Capra, director of photoplay, Joseph Walker, musical score by Dimitri Tiomkin. Produced and distributed by Columbia Pictures Corporation.

The Cast

Saunders	Jean Arthur
Jefferson Smith	James Stewart
Senator Joseph Paine	Claude Rains
Jim Taylor	Edward Arnold
Governor Hopper	Guy Kibbee
Diz Moore	Thomas Mitchell
Chick McGann	Eugene Pallette
Ma Smith	Beulah Bondi
Senate Majority Leader	H. B. Warner
President of the Senate	Harry Carey
Susan Paine	Astrid Allwyn
Mrs. Hopper	Ruth Donnelly
Senator MacPherson	Grant Mitchell
Senator Monroe	Porter Hall
Senate Minority Leader	Pierre Watkin
Nosey	Charles Lane
Bill Griffith	William Demarest
Carl Cook	Dick Elliott
	Billy Watson
	Delmar Watson
	John Russell
	Harry Watson
	Garv Watson
	Baby Dumpling

The Hopper Boys

A picture of which politicians disapprove is not by that token necessarily a good one, but the rumpus stirred up by *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* convinces me that the elements of importance I see in it are really there. Moving pictures, even those rare ones which deal with the serious problems of democratic government,

generally are not considered worthy of senatorial attention. Their inaccuracies are dismissed with the graceful shrug reserved for "entertainment". Therefore when *Mr. Smith* succeeds in evoking the capital's ire, we may safely assume that something more than mere entertainment is involved, that the picture has touched a sore spot, that, perhaps, it has even touched the truth.

The truth partially delineated in Frank Capra's new film is so obviously true that it is hard to understand why astute vote-getters rush into print to deny it. Political chicanery at some time or another touches the life of every citizen; from his own experience he knows as much as this picture tells, and more, of the operations of the machine bosses and their paid stooges. So when senators tell him that the film is a libel, my guess is that he will stamp them fools or knaves or both, if indeed he has not already done so. It is in any case clear that official Washington's disapproval of *Mr. Smith* will have no effect on the picture's box-office appeal except to enhance it. The film grossed the phenomenal sum of \$110,000 in its first week at Radio City Music Hall, and will probably repeat this record on a lesser scale throughout the nation's cinemas.

Though we laugh out of court the Senate's objections to its photographic portrait, the new film has other detractors with a different base for their objections. They are concerned for the artistic future of an admired director who seems to be repeating the formula of his greatest success, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*. No question but that Mr. Deeds and Mr. Smith are one and the same person. Both are young idealists who attack the citadels of corruption and triumph by force of sincerity alone. But the similarity is so open that it seems intended, and I wonder if the plot structure of the two pictures can be dismissed as a formula. It seems more like an idea, a viewpoint, an avenue approach to those aspects of the American scene with which Capra is deeply concerned. Here is a man who has the faculty of interesting audiences in almost anything he chooses to show them but who persistently returns to one set of circumstances which he peoples with essentially the same characters every time. It looks as though Capra



The public protests Mr. Smith's filibuster

feels he has something very important to say about these people. Whether or not we eventually agree with him about their importance, it seems imperative to examine closely an idea into which so much creative energy has been poured.

The scene he sets in *Mr. Smith* is a familiar one—political Washington, where silver-haired senators proclaim their independence of spirit and devotion to duty while tacitly following the orders of the man back home who controls the votes. On the sidelines are equally typical characters, a senatorial secretary and a political reporter; they are not exactly corrupt, but they have had to acquire a sort of protective cynicism in order to survive in a world governed by gangster morality. So far the picture is notably real, a naturalistic portrait of the surface of modern life superbly acted by Claude Rains, Edward Arnold, Jean Arthur, Guy Kibbee, Ruth Donnelly, Thomas Mitchell, the old standbys who lend Capra

the verisimilitude he needs. The first doubtful note is the appearance of Mr. Smith himself. Would a naive leader of Boy Rangers ever get a Senate seat? No, shout the scoffers, but Capra tells us it's all an amusing accident, and certainly what happens to the boy is believable enough. He is duped by his political superiors and taken for a ride by tooth-and-claw reporters out for a sensation at any cost. This is his natural fate, and it enables Capra to point out with cruel, ineluctable accuracy that Washington would make a Zioncheck out of the sanest of us. Actually, the picture should have ended with Mr. Smith discredited, made a fool of, relegated to the lunatic fringe of politics. Had it done so it would have been the truest and most devastating analysis of representative government yet on record.

But Mr. Smith triumphs, of course. He persists in the face of criminal calumny, stages a filibuster to end filibusters, and

eventually so moves his opponents that they come over to his side. We're left with the implication that all will be right with America now. Now this conclusion, though wholly unbelievable, is important just because it couldn't happen. In the middle of his picture, Capra, as he always does, shifts from a portrayal of objective reality to that of psychological reality. The obvious wish-fulfillment of the ending is much more than a movie evasion of the truth. It is a precise representation of the viewpoint of the average voter, a man often forgotten by those of us who like thoughtful realism, but whom Capra never forgets because they think alike. Both of these interesting people, the director and his sympathetic auditor, believe passionately in the American way of life and government. Since the depression, they have been forced to realize that something is wrong somewhere. But since, by hypothesis, the system itself is right, then the trouble must be with the way it is managed. Many films of the past ten years (not to mention other channels of mass opinion) have revealed the bitter conviction of everyday people that they are being betrayed by the "men higher up" whom they have entrusted with the reins of power. And they are forced by their own logic to conclude that the only way to set things right again is to replace the corrupt leaders with idealists who, magically, will retain their ideals in the face of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

This thesis, expounded in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, is applied to politics in the new Capra film. Its significance, it seems to me, lies not in its truth or falsity but in its persistence as an idea and its popularity with audiences. Individual idealism is no solution for any practical problem, but it is the totem people worship when every other way out cuts across their thinking habits. A film which embodies this phenomenon enjoys, to my mind, an importance beyond itself. It is to be evaluated less as a mirror of life than as a document of human psychology, an index to the temper of the popular mind. *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* is such a film, and the classic example of its type.

Richard Griffith

(Rated Exceptional)

Le Quai Des Brumes

(PORT OF SHADOWS)

From the original story by Pierre Mac Orlan, directed by Marcel Carne. Screenplay by Jacques Prevert; photographed by Schufstan and Alekkan; music by Maurice Jaubert. A Cine-Alliance production, distributed by the Film Alliance of the United States.

The Cast

Jean	Jean Gabin
Zabel	Michel Simon
Nelly	Michele Morgan
Lucien	Pierre Brasseur
Chauffeur	Perez
Doctor	Genin
Hotel Keeper	Legris
Panama	Delmont
Vittel	Aimois
An Artist	Le Vigan

THIS is another of those French pictures that reach us bowed down with gold medals and awards. It has prizes for the best direction and prizes for the best acting, and unofficial halos for France's most popular player, Jean Gabin. Its director, Marcel Carne, is still in his twenties, and *Port of Shadows* is the first of his pictures to be shown in America since *Bizarre Bizarre*.

How it will be received here is hardly problematical, though its gloom and concentration on the lowest stratum of human beings may tell against it among moralists and those who have become tired of the French passion for the murk and squalor of human outcasts. On the whole, however, it is hard not to believe that it will be ranked along with *Harvest* as the best French importation since *Grand Illusion* and a certain choice for the year's Ten Best.

The full story is easier to grasp on paper than at first sight on the screen. The central figure is a deserter from the French army who is picked up by a friendly truck-driver and deposited on the water-front of Le Havre. Once there his desire to escape from France becomes hopelessly tangled with the assortment of derelicts he meets: a trio of petty gangsters; a young girl whose affaire with one of the gang leaders has caused her perverse and jealous old guardian to murder him in a cellar; a neurotic artist who sees his own suicide as the most practical way of supplying the deserter with civilian clothes; and various and sundry wharf rats

who pass on and off the screen giving the final shrug of the shoulders to the necessity for living. Between them these hopeless people, whether the deserter's friends or foes, succeed in blocking his path to freedom and ending his life.

At first sight this bitter story, with its many ramifications and indirect surveys of personalities, may seem confused and often aimless. It has none of the tempo and smart editing of the American film, nor does it permit one to grasp all the whys and wherefores of its plot through clearcut statements in its opening reels. The reason for this, puzzling though it may seem to the audience, lies in the nature of the picture; in its intent to present a study of thwarted, twisted living, with each character seeking his own salvation regardless of the lives of those around him. If one can grasp this constant behavior-pattern of checked movement and personal limitations the lack of straight storytelling need not be felt and the movie-goer may adjust his screen sense to watching a study of derelicts moving endlessly around the inside of a trap, some searching for escape and some resigning themselves to what little nourishment they may pick from the floor.

It is surprising how admirably writer, director and cameraman have managed to share in the mood of these people and their surroundings. They have produced a picture that seems to move entirely under its own power, as though living circumstances surrounded every action. The camerawork is lovely, setting the interminable fog of Le Havre around the characters as bleakly and finally as prison walls. The variety of scenes never results in forced and inappropriate sequences; the ships at the waterfront, the lonely hut of the scavengers, the gaiety of the port fair, the trinket shop where the tinkling glass bells announce the entrances and exits of doomed people—all come before us easily and naturally and are combined in the unity of the picture. Even the humorous moments of the dialog manage to combine amusement with an aftertaste of bitterness and struggle.

The cast is excellently chosen, from the leads down to the lowest wharf rats, and is equally full of variety and individuality. Jean

Gabin—probably the most typed of all French actors—plays his part with that mixture of qualities we have come to appreciate so well in him—the easy, non-committal air that hides a passionate depth of feeling and suggests always the victim of circumstances, portrayed with the restraint and perfect timing of a first-rate actor. Michel Simon seems more at home here than in *The End of a Day* and fills his perverse role of “the ugly man who never was loved” with just the right combination of grimness and pathos. And Michele Morgan is more than just another of Gabin's women: she falls for him as inevitably as her many predecessors in the French film, but shows convincingly enough why he should have rated her safety higher than his own. These are but the leading trio; along with them come the cask-tapper whose ambition it is to sleep between clean white sheets; the mongrel that runs at Gabin's heels as futilely as his master runs to safety; the artist who cannot paint a swimmer without imagining him washed up dead on the shore; the owner of the scavengers' hut dressed regardless of weather in the one white suit and straw hat he bought in Panama twenty years before. They are all good and as much a part of the port of shadows as the fogs and crooked streets and the boats that carry the more fortunate humans to freedom and sunshine.

(Rated Exceptional)

N. D.

La Fin du Jour

(THE END OF A DAY)

From the original story by Charles Spaak and Julien Duvivier, directed by Julien Duvivier; photographed by Christian Matras; music by Maurice Jaubert. Produced by Regina, distributed by Juno Films, Inc.

The Cast

<i>Cabrisade</i>	<i>Michel Simon</i>
<i>Saint-Clair</i>	<i>Louis Jouvet</i>
<i>Marny</i>	<i>Victor Francen</i>
<i>Mme. Chabert</i>	<i>Gabrielle Dorziat</i>
<i>Jeannette</i>	<i>Madeleine Ozeray</i>
<i>M. Lucien</i>	<i>Aquilliere</i>
<i>Le Regisseur</i>	<i>Arthur Devere</i>
<i>Mme. Tusini</i>	<i>Sylvie</i>
<i>M. Philemon</i>	<i>Joffre</i>
<i>Deaubonne</i>	<i>Granval</i>

ALTHOUGH most of us have a tendency to consider the Gallic mind as absorbed in matters cold and logical, the French movie-makers are constantly

reminding us that it has more than a mere tendency to veer off to an entirely opposite extreme. The French have never, as Evelyn Gerstein pointed out in these columns a few years back, "been accorded much leeway as arbiters of sentiment without sex. Yet the vein is deep, though it seems casual, and runs from the lachrymose on the one hand to the satiric tight-rope of a Rene Clair on the other." Clair, Duvivier, Pagnol, Benoit-Levy have always had a weakness for characters whose minds and lives are sadly twisted and whose best efforts are thwarted and full of pain. *Poil de Carrotte*, *Merlusse*, *La Maternelle*, *Ballerina* are but four examples of a French tradition that aims at the uncovering of the softer sides and hidden wounds of human beings in such a way as to arouse an almost maternal affection for them in the hearts of an audience.

La Fin du Jour is the latest production in this line of traditional sentiment. Its characters are aged actors who have retired to a charitable home ("institution" would be too strong a word) to fill out their last years in re-living their old triumphs, failures, jealousies and tragedies, or in simply waiting quietly for the end to come. A few of them have a record of real achievement behind them; the less fortunate majority spend their time in imagining they have one too. Seen together, massed in the dining hall, the lounge, or crowding together to discuss a new arrival, they give simply an impression of pitiful inability in its last stages—an impression that creates a real snag in the effectiveness of the picture. For it is hard to watch these poor hams without feeling that their exaggerated posturing and emotionalism is shared by the screen actors who are portraying them! Louis Jouvet, especially, in his part of a passé matinee idol whose deprivation of adorners and applause drives him into insanity, suffers personal degradation in playing a part which calls for the very reverse of his principles of restrained and beautifully timed acting.

Aside from this feeling of staged unreality (which may not be sensed at all by most people) the picture is strong and certain in its emotions. It is mainly a study of characters and types, and as such it is

revealing and understanding. En masse these old people appear almost indistinguishable, but when the camera brings them forward one by one we find in each a fascinating individuality. Duvivier has learnt admirably the art of showing first the surface and then the reality: by cleverly confronting his characters with problems and obstructions he allows them to reveal their deepest selves through their reactions. His aim is directed entirely at the heart of his audience, to arouse warmth and pity for his struggling old ones, and if he succeeds it is because he refrains from making them too obviously appealing. Old they may be, but they still have preserved their petty faults and meannesses along with their kindness and humor, and do not hesitate to exercise them on their fellows. In effect, the whole individual is held up for judgment with a frankness to which an audience cannot fail to respond and enjoy. The deepest pleasure, one imagines, will be reserved for actors and actresses, since the theater alone is qualified to grasp the strange and complicated emotions and vanities of these fading veterans of their profession.

N. D.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

A New Quarterly

(Continued from page 7)

and allow the film-audience to study the technique of films under the technicians themselves, more with reference to immediate needs than to any abstract inclusiveness. Only by participation in the problems which face the film-maker, can the film-audience facilitate the film's growth towards positive, artistic and social aims."

The first issue will contain articles by Sawyer Falk, Harry Alan Potamkin, Alberto Cavalcanti, Richard Griffith, Kurt London, in addition to two scenario adaptations, discussion of special films by David Wolff and John Grierson, and letters from Hollywood and Paris.

The editors of FILMS are Lincoln Kerstein, Jay Leyda, Mary Losey, Robert Stebins and Lee Strasberg. It is issued by Kamin Publishers, 15 West 56th St., New York City, at 60 cents per copy, yearly subscription \$2.00.

The Use of the Radio in Community Motion Picture Activities

EARLIER in the year the National Board of Review Magazine called the attention of the Board's affiliated councils and other groups to the possibilities offered by the radio in promoting their work in the community. A number of these councils have been making such a use of the radio for some time and we believe their example may be followed by many others in the future. To this end we would like to give here a brief list of the principal factors involved in the planning of council radio programs, together with an outline of the programs presented by councils already active in such work. The problems and difficulties of presenting radio programs are often exaggerated, and we believe most of them can be disposed of very easily through co-operation and careful planning.

Radio Facilities

Many communities have one or more local radio stations and it is more than likely that these stations will welcome suggestions for regular broadcasts on so popular a subject as the movies. The Cleveland Cinema Club lists no less than four local stations over which special broadcasts may be heard. Broadcasts have been arranged by groups in Memphis, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Macon, New York City, St. Louis, Detroit, Sacramento, San Diego, and Riverside, Calif.; Emporia, Kansas; Elmira, N. Y., and many other centers. Once council members have got together and worked out some plan for a series of broadcasts there is little doubt that managers of local stations, especially those stations interested in educational and instructional programs, will provide the opportunity to present them, particularly if it is stressed that they are the work of a local community with community-wide interest and membership.

Program Material

In the selection of film material for broadcasting the possibilities are endless and must be guided somewhat by the time allowed on the air (fifteen minutes is the usual

time) and the locality of the station. In New York, for example, it is possible to draw on the steady flow of actors, directors, writers, etc., passing to and from Hollywood—an advantage denied to most other communities. The latter will have to rely for guest-speakers on authorities nearer home: local film critics, educators or ministers using the motion picture, libraries, students of the motion picture, etc. These guest-speakers may be interviewed by one or more council members on their special subjects or they may read a prepared paper, or take part in a debate on some selected aspect of the movies. As a rule it is best to have more than one voice on the program, a single speaker being inclined to become monotonous to an audience unless he or she has specially interesting material and is able to present it superlatively well.

In communities where guest-speakers are hard to find, the regular program may be devoted to discussions of current films, listings of selected films and summaries of reviewers' opinions on current films. The following excerpts from reports seem to sum up the general idea:

Macon Better Films Committee, its President, Mrs. Piercy Chestney, reports: "We are now in our eighth year of broadcasting. I compile the broadcast—a fifteen minute program—every week, and a different member of the committee reads it. Of course we always give auditions for our broadcasting. We do not believe it would be fair to the station to send them just any speaker. We feel that the news must be of some value, because when the local stations became a part of the Columbia system, out of fifteen or twenty sustaining local programs they dropped every one except the broadcast of the Better Films Committee. Also, we have been requested frequently to come and repeat the papers we have given over the radio in college chapels and various places of that kind"—*Better Films Council of East St. Louis, Illinois*: "Radio Station WTMV has been exceedingly generous in donating

fifteen minutes each Saturday morning since November 1935 for an informative broadcast relative to motion pictures in general and discussion of pictures booked for showing the following week. We sincerely appreciate their co-operation and recent assurance to assist us when possible in carrying out our objectives."—*Atlanta Better Films Committee and Board of Review*: "(We begin) with information on advanced pictures and any other idea of general interest. We close with comments on the pictures which come to the theatre the day after the broadcast. We broadcast every Thursday night and the pictures change on Friday. For the broadcast we use different members of the Committee to whom we give auditions because the right personality and the right voice must be considered."

The Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures of the National Board supplies up-to-date information on current motion pictures and is an important service to have at hand in preparing picture comments. Articles in the National Board of Review Magazine can often be used as the basis for radio discussion programs.

For the council that wishes to include material other than current films, or where there are restrictions against mentioning specific picture titles, there are many possibilities. Discussions of the work of prominent actors, directors and producers may be presented; recent books on the motion picture or books with a bearing on current movies may be reviewed or debated. Sometimes the showing of a film may coincide with the arrival in town of a person connected with it, and offers a chance of his joining in a discussion of it. Travel films can often make interesting material for discussion by a council member who knows the countries concerned. Debates on the motion picture in relation to education, music, travel, child guidance, etc., can be included periodically, as can playlets, or skits, with a motion picture tie-up. Local or national events and celebrations can often be used as the basis of one or more programs: e.g., the celebration this year of the movies' Fiftieth Anniversary is a good reason for devoting a few programs to a brief account of their

development. A book-film program can be arranged in connection with Book Week, an annual fall event for which the National Board prepares a list of Selected Book-Films. Or the local theatre manager might be interviewed over the air to describe the changes he has seen as a manager during the past years. Time and again a day or week set aside for national or local observance can well be used as the theme of a radio program. A number of councils have in the last two years observed Motion Picture Week, as a means of bringing the work of their organization more widely to the attention of the community, and have made especial use of the radio at that time. Chicago, Cleveland and Rochester are examples.

Junior motion picture activity in the high school classes or in clubs affiliated with the National Board 4-Star Clubs can provide some interesting programs. Two reports of junior radio work are given as examples: *Photoplay Club of Humes High School, Memphis, Tenn.*—"Both *Mayerling* and *If I Were King* furnished subjects for radio skits. The best skits in the group were used over our local station. This gave many students the opportunity to appear on a radio for the first time and a chance to see how necessary a cultural speech is and how difficult good diction is without constant work."—*The Photo Fan Club, Reading, Pa., Senior High School*—"Our club was requested to introduce the series of broadcasts presented by the Reading School District over the local station WEEU. The material for the broadcast, scheduled for October 7th, was written by selected members from the clubs. We presented a dialogue which gave the new members a vivid picture of what our club has been doing. Included in the script was material concerning the civic committee, the 4-Star Final, the Group Discussion Guides, and the movie column in our school paper. Another group of members, selected by try-outs, presented the broadcast which was well received by the radio audience."

Preparing the Program and Script

The farther ahead the radio committee can prepare its programs, the better it will be for them and for their listeners. This is especially true of programs in which a

number of speakers will be participating, giving them time to read over their parts and check on cues, unnecessary words or over-complicated sentences. It is also essential for advance publicity and the securing of guest-speakers. Furthermore, your radio station manager will probably want to look over the script a day or so before it is broadcasted. And without time being allowed for one or even two rehearsals it will be impossible to gauge the exact length of the script—an important point when using a medium in which seconds are quite as significant as minutes.

It is a good plan for the council to have a radio committee whose duty it is to draw up a plan of programs for the coming six weeks or so. On this committee will fall also the job of preparing the various scripts and collecting the required material.

Scripts should be typewritten on paper that does not crackle when a page is turned. (What sounds to the reader at the microphone like an ordinary rustle may hit the ear of the listener like a whip-crack!) Plenty of space should be kept between the lines to ensure easy reading, and the various speakers' names (in a debate, for instance) should be written in capital letters in the margin so that they know exactly when to come in. "Ad Libbing" should not be depended upon at first; when done by inexperienced speakers it is likely to upset the time schedule or change the cue of the following speaker. For beginners, therefore, it is important to keep strictly to the script, and care should be taken to see that any last-minute changes are marked in the script of each speaker. These sound like obvious points but we know they are sometimes overlooked and thus include them as necessary reminders for the beginners.

Delivery

The choice of speakers must, of course, depend somewhat upon the availability of members. Councils might well follow the plan of holding auditions to select a number of speakers with good voices. But since every voice is likely to sound different over the air, a few dollars might well be spent in having one or two records made (ask your local station to do this for you) which can be studied afterwards by the speakers

and the radio committee. The tenor and strength of individual voices is not a matter of great importance, since the sound engineer at the radio station will "test" the speakers' voices before the program goes on, and will help "control" them when they enter the microphone. The main task of the speakers and the radio committee is to make sure that the script has been well rehearsed prior to the broadcast and to see that the speakers are all familiar with their lines and cues. There is no better precaution against confusion and "mike-fright" than a proper study of the script.

* * * *

If these general principles are followed and the radio committee is formed on a co-operative basis, there is no reason why interesting series of programs should not be planned and successfully carried out. Frequent discussions will not only prevent too much rigidity in planning but will form a feeling of mutual work. Financial problems should scarcely arise, the typing of the script and the entertaining of guest speakers being the only probable items of expenditure.

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What makes a motion picture entertaining? Why is so much screen material adapted from novels and plays? What does incidental music contribute to a movie?

These three questions are taken from the ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS ON THE MOTION PICTURE recently compiled by the National Board of Review. If you are interested in the other questions and the answers, many of which suggest topics suitable for group discussion and study, write for them.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

- f ETERNALLY YOURS—David Niven, Loretta Young, Hugh Herbert. Original screen story by Gene Towne and Graham Baker. Directed by Tay Garnett. A fairly familiar plot about a marriage almost spoiled by the husband's career, but there is refreshing novelty in the incidents and characters (the husband is a prestidigitator), bright dialogue and a generally cheerful and entertaining atmosphere. United Artists.
- f HERE I AM A STRANGER—Richard Greene, Richard Dix, Roland Young,

Brenda Joyce. Based on a magazine story by Gordon Malherbe Hillman. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. A story laid mostly in college, about what happened to a nice boy to stiffen his convictions and make him make decisions—with a strong father-and-son element. 20th Century-Fox.

- f **HOLLYWOOD CAVALCADE**—Alice Faye, Don Ameche. Original screen story by Hilary Lynn and Brown Holmes. Directed by Irving Cummings. The ups and downs of a movie director against a background extending from early slapstick to the first talkies, in color. The re-creation of old Hollywood is vivid and accurate, and the picture will awaken many nostalgic memories. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **HONEYMOON IN BALI**—Madeleine Carroll, Fred McMurray, Allan Jones. Based on stories by Grace Sartwell Mason and Katharine Brush. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. A very well produced and directed romance, with good performances by a well-chosen cast. Madeleine Carroll in the role of a top-flight business woman whose peace of mind and love of her work is turned upside down by a visitor from Bali. Has a variety of colorful settings and a high entertainment value. Paramount.
- m ***INTERMEZZO, A LOVE STORY**—Leslie Howard, Ingrid Bergman, Edna Best, John Halliday. Original screen story by Gosta Stevens and Gustav Molander. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. The story of a famous violinist who interrupts his happy married life for an idyllic interlude with a lovely, eager young pianist. Charming produced, it introduces a new actress, Ingrid Bergman, who has great talent and a most attractive personality. A lot of excellent music in it. United Artists.
- f **KUSTENS GLADA KAVALJERER** (Happy Cavaliers)—Oke Soderblom, Carl-Arne Holmsten, Thor Modeen, Carin Ekclund. Original screen story by Solve Cederstrand. Directed by Ragnar Arvidson. A pleasant comedy in which a Swedish Wheeler and Woolsey are obliged to enter military service and choose the Navy as their field. Their efforts to adapt themselves to life in the Service, coupled with their romantic problems, are presented very amusingly. English sub-titles. (Swedish production.) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- m ***LA FIN DU JOUR** (The End of a Day)—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., p. 16.
- m ***LE QUAI DES BRUMES** (Port of Shadows)—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 15.
- f **LOTTE NELL' OMBRA** (Battles in the Shade)—Antonio Centa, Dria Paola, Renato Cialente. Written and directed by Domenico M. Gambino. An exciting and entertaining picture modelled on American lines, with foreign agents obtaining secret formulas and kidnapping the girl who knows how to use them. Variety of settings; on sea, land and in the air. Good-looking cast. Recommended for Italian audiences. (Italian production). Esperia Films.
- f ***MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13.
- m **MUTINY IN THE BIG HOUSE**—Charles Bickford, Barton MacLane, Dennis Moore. Original screen story by Martin Mooney. Directed by William Nigh. One of the cycle of prison stories, having the advantage of being well made and well acted. When a kid gets jailed for theft, the kindly prison chaplain befriends him, and is paid for his kindness when the kid smashes an attempt to break jail. Technical qualities help it above the average line of prison dramas. Monogram.
- m ***NINOTCHKA**.—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.
- f ***NURSE EDITH CAVELL**—Anna Neagle. Based on story "Dawn" by Captain Reginald Berkeley. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. A sober and dignified account of the English nurse in Belgium whom the German army executed in the Great War for giving aid to the enemy. It obviously tries not to be one-sided, but the facts are sure to aggravate feeling against the German military forces. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- f **OUR NEIGHBORS THE CARTERS**—Fay Bainter, Frank Craven, Edmund Lowe, Genevieve Tobin. Original screen story by Renaud Hoffman. Directed by Ralph Murphy. A lively family story with small town setting, very well cast and smartly directed. The head of the family runs the local drug-store and his children's lives are in danger of being turned upside down when a wealthy chain firm moves into town as his rival. All characters well delineated and their parts full of humor and feeling. Paramount.
- m ***RAINS CAME, THE**—Tyrone Power, George Brent, Myrna Loy. Based on novel by Louis Bromfield. Directed by Clarence Brown. A story of India and a catastrophe of earthquake and flood that brought rebirth to some cynical and frivolous English people. A rich and varied picture, unusual for its true and sympathetic depiction of Indian life. Recommended for libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- f ***REAL GLORY, THE**—Gary Cooper, David Niven, Andrea Leeds. Based on novel by Charles L. Clifford. Directed by Henry Hathaway. A vigorous and exciting story of the Philippine Constabulary in 1906, trying to train the Philipinos to protect themselves from a piratical tribe of Moros. Excellently done, with many unusually likeable characters, and an ideal part for Gary Cooper as an army doctor. Recommended for schools and libraries. United Artists.

- f **RIO**—Basil Rathbone, Victor McLaglen, Sigrid Gurie. Original screen story by Jean Negulesco. Directed by John Brahm. Another good job of directing by John Brahm, telling of a financial wizard who is sent to a French penal settlement for fraud. His wife and buddy go to Rio to be near him, but his wife has lost faith in him by the time he escapes. While the story does not amount to much, the general handling raises it above the average production. Universal.
- f **RULERS OF THE SEA**—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Will Fyfe, Margaret Lockwood. Original screen story by Talbot Jennings, Frank Cavett and Richard Collins. Directed by Frank Lloyd. A fine, elaborately produced story of the beginning of steam instead of sail in crossing the Atlantic, with excellent Scottish atmosphere in its home and factory scenes and vivid episodes of storms at sea. Paramount.
- f **SCIPIONE L'AFRICANO** (Scipio Africanus)—Isa Miranda, Francesca Braggiotti, Annibale Ninchi, Camillo Pilotto. Original screen story by C. Gallone, M. Dell'Anguillara and S. Luciani. Directed by Carmine Gallone. One of the most lavish productions to come out of Italy in recent years, telling the story of Scipio Africanus' famous battle against Hannibal and the Carthaginians. Essentially nationalistic and marred by wordiness and posturing. Has very good entertainment value for Italian audiences, and is impressive in its use of mass effects and rich setting. (Italian production). Esperia.
- fj **SKY PATROL**—John Trent, Jackie Coogan. Original screen story by Hal Forrest. Directed by Howard Bretherton. One of Tailspin Tommy's adventures, concerned with catching ammunition smugglers and teaching Jackie Coogan to get over his aversion to shooting people. Monogram.
- f **STOP LOOK AND LOVE**—Jean Rogers, William Frawley, Minna Gombell. Based on play "The Family Upstairs", by Harry Delf. Directed by Otto Brower. A pleasant family comedy centering around the oldest daughter's first romance. Though there are no big names in the cast it is a good one, bubbling with amusing human nature. 20th Century-Fox.
- m **SUED FOR LIBEL**—Kent Taylor, Linda Hayes, Lilian Bond, Morgan Conway. Original screen story by Wolfe Kaufman. Directed by Leslie Goodwins. An entertaining murder story with plenty of suspense. A newspaperman broadcasts, by mistake, the wrong verdict in a sensational murder trail and has to save his paper from the ensuing libel suit. RKO Radio.
- m **THOSE HIGH GRAY WALLS**—Walter Connolly, Onslow Stevens, Iris Meredith. Original screen story by William A. Lillman. Directed by Charles Vidor. This prison story would probably be more notable if it had not had so many predecessors. Walter Connolly does a splendid job as the imprisoned doctor trying to help his fellow convicts without bucking prison discipline. Though some of the situations are contrived they are so well handled by writer and director that the result is thoroughly entertaining. Columbia.
- f **THUNDER AFLOAT**—Wallace Beery, Chester Morris, Virginia Grey. Original screen story by Ralph Wheelwright and Commander Harvey Haislip. Directed by George B. Seitz. A salty adventure story of 1918, submarine chasers and the ash-can fleet—exciting and not a bit neutral. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **TORPEDOED**—H. B. Warner, Noah Beery, Richard Cromwell, Hazel Terry. Original screen story by Bartimeus. Directed by Norman Walker. An exciting film about a British destroyer whose officers get involved in a South American revolt which threatens the British consulate. Made with Admiralty help, it is a definite plug for the British navy, but stands up very well considered as a dramatic thriller (British Production). Film Alliance of the United States.
- f **TWO BRIGHT BOYS**—Jackie Cooper, Freddie Bartholomew. Original screen story by Val Burton and Edmund L. Hartman. Directed by Joseph Santley. An amusing story of an English crook and his son who come to America posing as rich tourists and fall into the hands of an oil king who needs help in squeezing a poor Irish family out of their land. Cooper and Bartholomew play very enjoyably against one another. Universal.
- f ***U-BOAT TWENTY-NINE**—Conrad Veidt, Sebastian Shaw, Valerie Hobson. Based on novel by J. Storer Coulston. Directed by Michael Powell. An excellent spy-melodrama of the last war, with interesting settings near Scapa Flow, full of surprises and excitement, with a fine cast and directed with an individual style. In spite of its subject it does not arouse animosity toward either side. (British production). Columbia.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f **ACRES OF PLENTY**—Instructive survey of a large model farm in Southern California. RKO Radio.
- fj **AGHILEEN PINNACLES**—One of the adventures of Father Hubbard, the glacier priest, exploring the hitherto unscaled pinnacles on the Alaskan peninsula. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj **ASH-CAN FEET, THE** (MGM Miniatures)—About David Bushnell, whose inventions in the time of Washington and the Revolutionary War were the origins of the modern submarine and depth bomb. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **BAKOM PANSRAD SIDA** (Behind Ironclad Sides)—Interesting study of life within a Swedish naval vessel. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

- f CATCHING WHOPPERS (Grantland Rice spotlight)—Good pictures of deep sea fishing. Paramount.
- fj CITA, THE—A documentary film, showing the contrast between the old-time small town and its life, with the slums of a modern industrial city, which in turn is contrasted with a modern model community, photographed with unusual beauty and selective judgment. Recommended for schools and libraries. World.
- f CLOCKING THE JOCKEYS (Sports Review)—Interesting film showing the rigid life of training a jockey leads. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj DAY ON TREASURE ISLAND (Fitzpatrick Travel Talk)—A color trip through the International Golden Gate Fair at San Francisco. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f DRUNK DRIVING (Crime Doesn't Pay Series)—Dramatization of the grewsome results of mixing liquor and driving. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj ECUADOR (Color Cruises)—An interesting travelogue in color. Paramount.
- f EN OSTGOTARESA (Trip to Ostergotland, A)—A trip by boat up a Swedish canal, full of fine scenery and items of interest. (Swedish production). Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- fj FILMING THE FLEET (Adventures of the Newsreel Cameraman)—The United States naval fleet in war maneuvers. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj *FOOTBALL THRILLS, '38 (Pete Smith Specialty)—Some remarkable captures, by the camera-man, of crucial play in last year's football season. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 66—Man Made Jungle—Famous McKee Tropical forest in Florida. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 67—"In the Heart of Africa"—Instructive account of life in Rhodesia, full of interest and well photographed. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 68—Strange Birds of the Americas—What the title says. Universal.
- f HUNTING HOUNDS (RKO Sportscope)—Hunting wild cats with a special breed of hound. Exciting. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 1, THE (Series 6)—"Soldiers with Wings"—An account of the new and improved air forces of the United States. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 2, THE (Series 6)—Another admirably executed survey of a topical subject. Discusses the position of the British Navy today in the North Sea, China Seas and Mediterranean and shows the dispersion of warships in these seas, their aims and ultra-modern armament. RKO Radio.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED NO. 1 (Color Parade)—Interesting studies of cutting gems; making china; polaroid glass; commercial advertising signs. Vitaphone.
- f MONROE DOCTRINE—Dramatization, in color, of the shaping of the Monroe Doctrine and its application by later presidents. Vitaphone.
- fj MOROCCO (Columbia Tours)—A good travelogue in color. Columbia.
- f NATURAL WONDERS OF WASHINGTON STATE (Fitzpatrick traveltalk)—A travelogue rich in color and fine scenery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f NEVADA UNLIMITED (Reelism)—Survey of the State of Nevada with special emphasis on mining, gambling and Reno. RKO Radio.
- fj *NINTH STATE, THE—An informative as well as entertaining picture about New Hampshire, its subject matter selected and arranged excellently, and beautifully photographed in color. Screen story and direction by Emerson Yorke. Recommended for schools and libraries. Emerson Yorke.
- f ONE AGAINST THE WORLD (Passing Parade)—A gripping dramatization of the first major surgical operation, performed by Dr. Ephraim McDowell despite the fury of his own townfolk. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PERU (Color Cruise)—Interesting travelogue of this colorful land. Paramount.
- fj *PUBLIC HOBBY NUMBER ONE—Excellent bit about stamp collecting, and how U. S. stamps are made. Paramount.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 1—New use of cotton in road-beds; new kitchen gadgets; a woman's medical school in London; etc.
- fj *SET 'EM UP—A Pete Smith Specialty, and an excellent one, about bowling. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION NOS. 66 AND 67—An entertaining selection of strange events and personalities, including strange pets, self-caught fish, a hearse converted into a family car, a legless skater, a builder in mother-of-pearl, etc. Universal.
- f SWORD FISHING (Bow and Arrow Adventures)—Exciting shots of Howard Hill shooting marlin with a bow and arrow. Vitaphone.
- f THINK FIRST—How girls are taught shoplifting, and how the police catch them. Interesting and effective. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f *UNSEEN GUARDIAN (Passing Parade)—A concise and excellent description of the running of penny-ante rackets; the tests employed by the Underwriters' Laboratories before approving a product; the problem of adopting children from U. S. orphanages. Unusual and highly interesting. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WARNING, THE—An interesting document of how England has prepared for air raids. Alliance Film Corp.

MUSICALS, NOVELTIES AND SERIALS

- f ARTIE SHAW'S CLASS IN SWING (Headliners)—Some of the A B C's of swing furnished by the commentator while the band provides illustrations. Paramount.
- f BLUE DANUBE, THE—Splendid rendering of Strauss' famous waltz by the National Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Frederick Feher. Paramount.
- fj DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (Serial) Nos. 3-10—Ralph Byrd. Original screenplay by Barry Shipman, Ronald Davidson and Walter Miller. Directed by William Witney and John English. Tracy's troubles begin when his world famous prisoner escapes the death house and begins to carry out his devilish plans for international sabotage. Republic.
- f FASHION FORECASTS NO. 5—Pretty girls, new fashions, and Ilka Chase's amusing sassy comment. 20th Century-Fox.
- f ICE FROLICS—Some fine skating appears to a little girl when she goes to sleep and dreams. Vitaphone.
- f RHUMBA RHYTHM (MGM Miniatures)—Two girls crash Hollywood's Law Conga to see the Rhumba contest and the parade of stars. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f RIDE, COWBOY, RIDE—Western short in vivid color. Vitaphone.
- f TED FIO-RITO AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Revival of old favorites composed by this popular orchestra leader. Paramount.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- f BOOKWORM, THE—A cartoon fantasy in color, with characters escaping out of books to help a lowly bookworm evade a raven. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj CAPTAIN SPANKY'S SHOWBOAT—Spanky and his crew give a show. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f *DAY OF REST, THE—One of Robert Benchley's better comic satires—about a man's efforts to rest on Sunday. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f FRESH VEGETABLE MYSTERY, THE (Color Classics)—An amusing cartoon of night doings in the kitchen. Paramount.
- f HOOK LINE AND SINKER (Terry-toon)—A duck with an Ed Wynn voice and a cat with a Jimmy Durante voice, go fishing—amusing. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT FUN (Merrie Melodies Cartoon)—An amusing cartoon satire of a travelog, with the Northern capes as a setting. In color. Vitaphone.
- fj LITTLE BROTHER RAT (Merrie Melodies Cartoon)—What happens to little rats who try to steal owls' eggs. Vitaphone.
- fj LITTLE LION HUNTER (Merrie Melodies Cartoon)—Little negro hunter is saved from a lion by a friendly bird. Vitaphone.
- fj MONKEYS IS THE CWAZIEST PEOPLE (Lev Lehr)—Monkey antics, some of them quite astonishing. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj NAUGHTY NEIGHBORS (Looney Tunes Cartoon)—Porky in a Kentucky farmyard feud. Vitaphone.
- f ONE MOTHER'S FAMILY (Cartoon)—Amusing color cartoon of the trials of a mother hen with chicks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj ORPHAN DUCK, THE (Terry-Toon)—An amusing color cartoon, in which a duckling makes good with Mrs. Hen and Mr. Rooster. 20th Century-Fox.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c
Special Film Lists.....10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

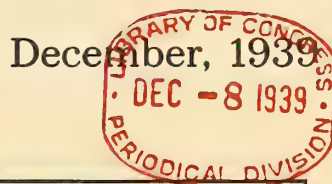
National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils.....10c

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XIV, No. 9



The beginning of a three-way partnership that extended through "The Roaring Twenties"

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
 - m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
 - j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
 - *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.
-
- f ALL WOMEN HAVE SECRETS — Jean Cagney, Joseph Allen, Jr., Virginia Dale. Based on a story by Dale Eunson. Directed by Kurt Neumann. An entertaining picture of what happens when college boys and girls get married while still in college. A bit overdone in places but on the whole well acted and directed. Paramount.
 - fj ALLEGHENY UPRISING—Claire Trevor, John Wayne. Based on novel "The First Rebel" by Neil H. Swanson. Directed by William A. Seiter. The story of James Smith leader of the British colonists in Pennsylvania who rise in defense of their liberty. Plenty of action. RKO Radio.
 - f AMORE SULLE ALPI (Alpine Passion)—Simona Bourday, Gustavo Diessl. Original screen story by Antonio Quipper. Directed by Serge de Poligny. The story of a lonely outcast in the Alps—driven there by the unjust suspicion of the villagers and kept away until he saves two of them from death in the mountains. A few technical faults are well made up for by the splendid mountain sequences and beautiful settings, plus vivid mountaineering thrills. (Italian production). Esperia.
 - f ANOTHER THIN MAN—William Powell, Myrna Loy. Based on original screen story by Dashiell Hammett. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke, II. Another gay and sophisticated comedy of the clever Nick Charles, his lovely wife Nora, the mischievous dog, Asta, and the latest comer to the Charles' household. Both the situations and the dialogue are amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
 - fj BAD LITTLE ANGEL—Virginia Weidler, Gene Reynolds. Based on novel by Mar-

garet Turnbull. Directed by William Thiele. A story of the Sunday school type, about a little orphan girl whose faith reformed most of the unvirtuous characters in a small town. Quite pious and moral. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f BLONDIE BRINGS UP BABY — Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake. Original screen story by Robert Chapin. Directed by Frank R. Stringer. An amusing story of Baby Dumpling starting school, and what happens to Daisy the dog. Columbia.
- f COWBOYS FROM TEXAS — The Three Mesquiteers. Original screen story by Oliver Drake. Directed by George Sherman. The Three Mesquiteers take a hand in the struggle between cattle-men and homesteaders in Texas at the turn of the century, bringing peace by driving out the crooks. Republic.
- f DANGER FLIGHT—John Trent. Original screen story by Hal Forrest. Directed by Howard Bretherton. A Tailspin Tommy adventure story, in which Tommy turns a young boy in the right direction during a crucial episode involving payroll bandits. Juvenile in plot and excitement. Monogram.
- f DEAD END KIDS ON DRESS PARADE, THE—Leo Gorcey. Original screen story by Tom Reed. Directed by William Clemens. A very sentimental picture of what happens to the Dead End Kids when they enter military school. Not very well done but holds the interest. Warner Bros.
- f DIAMONDS ARE DANGEROUS—George Brent, Isa Miranda. Based on story by Frank O'Connor. Directed by George Fitzmaurice. An interesting picture of clever diamond thieves and cleverer detectives. A beautiful woman taking the rap for her confederate in crime, is released from prison to work for the police and of course falls in love with her partner at detection and all ends well. Paramount.
- f *DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK — See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 12.
- f *FIRST LOVE—Deanna Durbin — Original screen story by Bruce Manning and Lionel House. Directed by Henry Koster. A story of a modern Cinderella who goes to New York to live with her wealthy relatives. Deanna grown to lovely womanhood finds her prince and lives happily ever after. Outstanding in the supporting cast are Helen Parrish as the spiteful cousin, Leatrice Joy as the silly horoscope-reading aunt, Eugent Pallette as the much harrassed uncle and Robert Stack as the lucky prince. In fact the entire cast is excellent and the dialogue witty. Universal.

(Continued on page 10)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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National Board of Review Conference

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, NEW YORK CITY, FEBRUARY 1ST-3RD, 1940

THE season of 1939-40 is being observed by the motion picture industry for celebration of its Fiftieth Anniversary, the fifty years that have passed since Edison invented his movie-machine. The almost incredible advance of this machine since the 19th century is apparent to us all; many of us have been fortunate enough actually to have followed the technical steps from the near beginnings to the present day.

There remain, however, many advances and developments in the history of the movies with which the layman is unfamiliar. The old-timer in the industry is able to look back and see them in a fairly accurate order, while the historian endeavors to evaluate and classify them for permanent record. The Fiftieth Anniversary comes at a time when probings into the past of the movies are at their height, as a reminder that we must make haste to record the memories of the past before they have slipped out of our reach.

For these reasons it is felt by the National Board that the coming Annual Conference should recognize the work of the industry in the past fifty years. No conference can, of course, attempt to present a detailed history of the motion picture. All

it can do is attempt to arouse serious interest in a great achievement, to discuss certain important moments in the years of the movies and impress their significance upon the conference audience. No time could be more appropriate for this than the time set aside by the industry for celebrating its fiftieth birthday.

Such a historical conference presents many possibilities, a field so wide in fact that it is not possible at this early date to state with any accuracy what shall be included and what shall be left out. All we can do for the present is tell our readers that an attempt will be made to present authoritative speakers whose knowledge of the industry's achievements comes either from personal experience or careful study. In order to bring the survey up to date, addresses will range further than the historic past and the speakers will attempt to discuss the present and possible future of the motion picture on the basis of previous experience and present outside problems. In short, this coming Conference will discuss the historic trends of the motion picture—those we know and have experienced, and those which are still in the making and can only be generally foreshadowed.

What Is a Good Movie?

This is the second of a series of replies given by members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board. The third and last group of replies will be published next month.

Miss Mary B. Miller

THE movies have achieved so much competency of late, one director quickly profiting from another's successes, that a certain expert manipulation of the various elements involved in the making of a good picture should, I think, be taken for granted. Sequences should move with relevance and economy through the different situations that build up around the central plot. Types should be chosen with imagination. A rhythm of movement should be established. There should be fine photography. Dialogue should have compression and intensity. All these happy elements combined cannot, however, constitute what I choose to call a good picture. Something else is required.

To make a very complicated definition as simple as possible, let me divide pictures into two classes; those I think are bad and those I find good. In the first class I place all pictures—no matter how brilliantly executed—deliberately designed to captivate what the U. S. Army tests discovered to be the average adult intelligence—the mind of a child of twelve. Pictures of this kind move on the surface of things. They glitter: they have but one dimension.

In the second class I place those pictures that do not insult the intelligence of an adult human being; that have the rare virtue of fidelity to life and not to daydream. These move into a second dimension. They have depths; they penetrate the emotions. They are created by directors who feel profoundly the essences of the subjects they handle.

It has occurred to me that a scrupulous concentration upon a single idea is responsible for some of the finest pictures. The little French film *Merlusse* was moving because it dealt simply with a poignant truth about boys—that their cruelty is quick to turn to generosity and kindness when they

are touched by compassion. This picture never meandered into irrelevancies, never distracted by the constant use of the cute and trivial capers usually ascribed to boys in boarding school. It stuck to its grave and beautiful mood throughout.

Great books are, on the whole, more likely to become inferior films. This is due, I think, to the fact that there is in them too much great material for the movie to handle with success. The makers of *Wuthering Heights* were successful because they confined themselves to the story of Heathcliffe and Cathy and did not go into the psychological conclusions evident in the latter portions of this great novel. Keeping to one facet in a many-faceted work of genius, they compressed and intensified the emotional impact of the story. The overwhelming passion of two violent characters was communicated.

Another way to achieve an exceptional picture is to concentrate on mood. This method is achieved by means of the photography rather than through the acting. A striking example is *Port of Shadows*, where a melodramatic plot is taken from an unimportant book. Melodrama being an integral part of life, the makers of this remarkable picture realized that to give this fact beauty and significance was to make the scenes through which the plot developed the all important thing—to let the docks and the bistros, the narrow, ill-lighted streets of Le Havre, the mists lifting from the harbor at dawn, the great ship at the quay preparing for departure, the cranes in action against the uncertain light emit the very essence of dark, accumulating tragedy. Anyone who has responded to the poetry in this picture will not, I think, ever again find himself around the docks or in the sordid streets behind the waterfronts of home or foreign ports without a sudden identification of the environment with the mood and climate of melodrama.

Good movies, then, are faithful to life and not to the manufacture of dreams about life. They are concentrated and employ a scrupulous economy. I have noticed that the ex-

ceptional films are rarely—with the exception of the great Russian films—elaborate and expensive productions. They are not loaded with extraneous material. They do not use brilliant technical tricks to display an empty competence. They may occupy themselves with a single aspect of human behavior—with mood, with comedy, with terror or pathos, as the case may be. But they do not make false statements. They are at home with life. When they intend you to be moved they do not descend into the sloughs of sentimentality. Their tenderness is delicate. Their tragedy is authentic. There is a stamp of truth upon them.

Mr. Frank Ward

FIRSTLY—the subject matter, the social content, is important.

Secondly—The story must be told in a cinematic way to appeal visually to the spectator. It must have *movement* and not be static. To merely photograph a good play does not make it a good movie. The camera work and the editing of a film, pictorial qualities, etc., go a long way to making a movie better than it would be without these assets.

Thirdly—Intelligent, honest, sincere direction are very important. Realism, plausibility, documentary background wherever possible, intelligent research are all essential.

Fourthly—Films should not depend too much on dialogue—if there is dialogue it should have a purpose and be well done and be an integral part of the picture.

Lastly—Good actors go a long way in making a film seem believable. I think the director is greatly responsible for good or bad performances of his actors. It is possible to have some very good films without actors, as for instance some of the documentaries that we have seen. A film to be good must sustain interest, excite or stimulate the audience and entertain them.

Richard Griffith

Film Correspondent, Los Angeles Times

THE two opening shots of Chaplin's *Modern Times* show a flock of sheep coming down a runway and a line of men entering a factory. In that brief bit of foot-

age the director has revealed the essential nature of the movie medium. The first fact about the film is its ability to reproduce views of the objective world. The second, equally important fact is its ability to order those views, not in terms of the time and space relationships which govern real life, but in terms of *theme*. Chaplin, in the opening of his film, is not interested in either the sheep or the men he shows, but in the idea he expresses by joining the two.

In his editorial capacity the film director may organize the world of space and time into relationships which tell a story, point a moral, recite a fact or build a philosophic speculation. His primary endeavor in so doing is to destroy the limitations of the human time sense, to place the arbitrary moment of the present in proper relation to its past and future. In fulfilling this human wish the film recognizes the fact which Lander cites: "... For the present, like a note in music, has significance only in relation to what is past and what is to come."

Mrs. Francis Taylor Patterson,
Instructor in Photoplay Composition,
Columbia University.

ONE which uses extensively and competently the vast technical resources of the motion picture camera and the sciences of light, color and sound production, as well as the richness of the other arts which the motion picture incorporates in its own composite self.

One in which distinction in acting, imagination in directing, interesting subject matter and attractive backgrounds are all present to a marked degree, and no one of which is noticeably lacking.

One which treats life with realism and imagination; which checks with one's experience of people and conduct and ideas; one in which the subject matter springs from conflict in character, from clash of wills, from maladjustments and injustices and people's reaction to them; one which notates human emotions accurately, avoiding over-ripe sentiment and emotional clichés.

One which stirs the mind, satisfies the heart and pleases the eye.

One that is essentially pictorial; that tells its story primarily to the eye; that makes use of the flexibility of the camera; in short, a *moving picture*.

Frederic M. Thrasher,
Professor of Education
New York University

THE essentials of a good movie in my opinion are relatively simple, although to produce such a movie involves the highest degree of training of numerous technicians and the finest artistry of creative minds.

The basic essentials are, in my opinion, technical excellence, artistic worth, and adequate use of cinematic resources.

1. *Technical excellence.* This involves the highest standards of mechanical efficiency; in a word, good photography combined with proper sound reproduction.

A broader conception of technical excellence would include: application of the principles of composition to the scene; the proper and effective synchronization of sound and photography; good continuity and editing; well planned and appropriate scenery, props, and costumes; and authenticity of background, events and characters in films which need to be historically and sociologically correct.

2. *Artistry and creative imagination.* It should be borne in mind that the elements which are essential to the artistic soundness of a film vary depending upon the type and nature of the film. Obviously some of these elements are basic to all films. Good scenario technique, for example, is required whether the film be educational, industrial, documentary, propaganda, or entertainment.

Each type of film, however, has its own peculiar standards of merit. In referring to the essentials of a good entertainment film, for example, story, plot, and scenario, in my opinion, are the major factors which are necessary to achieve artistic excellence. Good acting, of course, is essential to bring the story to life. The major artist, however, is the director and upon his skill in weaving the various elements of the production together, depends the total impression and artistic worth of the film. When we say that

excellence of direction is the most important factor in making a good movie, we assume of course that the director's work will not be marred by mediocre actors, a poor story, inadequate settings or costumes or poor photographic technique. All of these elements are essential in the making of a good movie.

3. *Qualities peculiar to the cinema.* There is a third essential, however, that must not be overlooked; that is, the necessity of utilizing the resources which are peculiar to the cinematic medium and which are usually not available to other forms of art. The essence of pure cinema is movement through space because the film represents the only art form which can so well express motion. The resources of the camera make it possible for this motion to transcend the limitation imposed upon the legitimate stage. The motion picture can take you over the ocean, through the clouds, down the canyons, into the earth. It may use a valley or a whole terrain for its setting. For this reason the motion picture is peculiarly able to present certain types of subject matter which are difficult for other art forms—such as the conquest of the air, warfare on land and sea, the chase, the horse race, and other types of movement. To be able to present movement the screen bestows upon the cinema the capacity for greatly stimulating an audience and thus enhancing the power of the film to entertain.

It has often been said that a motion picture is something more than a stage play photographed or a novel in which the attempt is made to translate the material accurately to the screen. In both cases these forms need to be adapted to the peculiar requirements and opportunities of the cinematic medium. The stage play needs to be released from the limits of time and space which are necessarily imposed upon it. The motion picture can do a great deal more with dialogue than is possible on the stage because the microphones amplify and control all sounds which the audience hears. The lover does not have to declaim in a movie because the microphone picks up his faintest whisper.

The camera itself gives to the motion
(Continued on page 10)

Fifty Years of Films

By RICHARD GRIFFITH

Film Correspondent, Los Angeles Times

I

IN 1896* the first public showing of motion pictures was held in America. In 1939, less than half a century later, a Film Library exists to tell us that the movies are getting along in years and that they exist in great numbers. As if we didn't know! Even to those of us who love them, they are overwhelmingly ubiquitous. The curator of the Film Library herself has calculated that it would take several thousand years of seeing films to make any one person a reliable authority, and Miss Barry should know. Although a film is more expensive to produce than any other work of art, the annual output of movies easily rivals the number of plays, paintings, sculptures, or even books which appear in a similar period. More than five hundred issue from Hollywood each year, not to mention the produce of England, France, Russia, Germany, and the little-known but steadily working industries of Scandinavia, Italy, The Balkans, the Low Countries, Central Europe, Japan, the British Dominions, South America, and, let's say, Siam. Considered in terms of quantity, the movies seem less like a human product than an inundating force of nature.

We, or people like us, created the movies, but within the short space of one man's lifetime they have become bigger than ourselves. They are perforce part of everybody's daily routine and, as Senator Carter Glass put it, life for many Americans consists of little more than eating and sleeping and going to the movies. Because they are so many and various, we take them for granted, no longer wondering at them or even criticizing them very much, but just seeing the relatively few which come our way. How could it be otherwise? Who takes it upon himself to discriminate, to tag

the movies for what they are worth to life and to us who live it today? The film scholar tries, but though he is the first of his kind to assist at the birth of an art, he is already outdistanced, years behind schedule, left excavating the remote beginnings like any Egyptologist. And we cannot wait for him to catch up and tell us what to think. For meanwhile the movies, an influence as well as a satisfaction, are a vital part of our experience. They matter in our lives, and the realization that fifty years of them have already passed brings us up with a guilty start. Somehow, and sometime soon, we must relate all this inordinate pressure on our thoughts and feelings, yes and all this easy pleasure, to a lifelike scale of things.

A reckoning wouldn't be so necessary if the movies managed to provide each person with something he could use. But even their vast variety is not infinite enough for that. Everybody goes to the movies because they are "wonderfully real and singularly exhilarating," as the New York Times said of that memorable first night in 1896. But real and Dionysian as they are, we feel nevertheless that there is some lack in them, some incompleteness which no doubt could easily be filled, if only—— If only what? No one knows yet, nor has since 1900 or thereabouts when the need began to be felt. Aesthetes blame the producers, producers blame the boxoffice, which is a polite euphemism for the public, and the public knows not whom to blame, but every five years or so expresses its general dissatisfaction with the situation by staying away from the theatres in great numbers. Whenever this happens, the producers speedily introduce a technical innovation or a new kind of subject and announce that this fills the gap and the movies have once again emerged from their infancy. Most of us accept the novelty and are satisfied for awhile, but presently the aching void is felt once more and we are back where we started. And there, I believe, is the trouble. Year after year the producers and the technicians hang

* The fifty years of the title, and of the industry's Jubilee, date from Edison's invention of the movie machine itself in October 1889.

new decorations on the movie until the thing itself has been hidden from sight. We look at the ornaments and are momentarily pleased by their glitter, but not for long, because it is the movie itself we are seeking and whose burial from sight leaves us dissatisfied, restless, and impatient of the substitute offered in its place.

Where then is this *ding an sich* of the motion picture which I hypothesize as the object of our search? No one is very sure, and certainly I am not, though in company with other daring members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays I recently put in the record an answer to the question: "What is a good movie?" My answer was hardly final, even as an opinion, but that the question should be asked again at this late date shows that the object we are searching for is still the same. I believe it always has been, that the history of the screen is the story of an effort to discover what the screen essentially is, and how it can offer us full measure of the pleasure and profit we feel are potential in it. Whether or not this is finally true, it is accurate in the widest historical sense. Every time the movies have lost ground it has been because somebody has been trying to make them do something they are not fitted for. Conversely, they have regained their audience and become productive again whenever interest in their essential nature has been restored. Thus their whole history has been governed by the development of the conception we have held of what the movie can and should do.

The first people to be concerned with the motion picture were its inventors, who very naturally looked upon it as a contrivance for recording faithfully whatever occurred in front of the camera, and were chiefly interested in making it do that job better. They missed the magic inherent in the thing; that remained to be discovered by the small-time showmen who originally exhibited it as a mechanical marvel. These men sensed that the public liked the thing for itself, for its essential quality of lifelike movement, rather than merely as a novelty. Having perceived that, these business men and their employees asked themselves what sort of movement the camera should record, and in what manner the record should be made.

The first tentative answers to that question provided early conceptions of the purpose and right use of the movie, and also established the twin tendencies to discover and to obscure the essential nature of the medium. Those tendencies have continued ever since, and remain today very much as they were in 1900.

Training and instinct led the earliest American movie makers to film the active life of city streets, and experience soon taught them the appeal of the dramas to be found in the movement-packed activities of the fire and police departments. Soon they were telling little stories of daily life, but though much was faked and re-staged no one thought to develop a full narrative or to extend the scope of the film beyond a record of reality. No one in America, that is; in France there was a man who saw something of the opportunity, and as Lewis Jacobs points out, George Melies was the father of the American as well as the French film. An imaginative and witty young magician with a theatrical background, he first became fascinated with the intrinsic marvel of the movie and then discovered by accident the greater marvel of making the impossible happen on the screen by trick photography. Screen magic suggested fantasy, and Melies borrowed from the theatre he knew the idea of telling a story in successive scenes. This was a revolution. Hitherto each film shot had remained complete in itself; hereafter, Melies and his successors carried the theme of one shot over into another, and screen narrative was born.

Besides being an innovator, Melies was an artist. His numerous films, and particularly the famous *Trip To The Moon* and *Impossible Voyage* were imaginatively fantastic and remarkably witty. In America they fired the imagination of a young Edison cameraman, Edwin S. Porter, who provided the next step forward in 1903 with *The Life of an American Fireman* and *The Great Train Robbery*. Melies had learned to tell a story, but he told it in the manner of the stage. Every event occupied exactly as much time on the screen as it would have to do in real life, and the camera was moved only when the story shifted from one locality to another. Porter saw that the

camera must also point the significant and delete the irrelevant. His introduction of the close-up and long-shot within the single geographic location brought into being the *editing principle*, which is the basis of motion picture technique. With a free camera to watch them, events remained on the screen only as long as they contributed to the narrative; the Aristotelian unities were destroyed, and it was possible to place side by side two happenings physically remote from one another, thus introducing the possibilities of dramatic contrast, parallelism, irony.

This new subtlety and fluidity made Porter's films vastly popular and his technique was widely absorbed in America. Porter and his followers also opened a new source of popularity: subject. The movies were then cheap and insignificant, and therefore appealed almost entirely to the lower classes. Most of the early directors and cameramen were of the people themselves, and knew how to appeal to them. They brought to the screen the teeming life of the city streets, expressing popular problems in the idiom of the hour. Within the first decade of the new century, these men had created the beginnings of a new art, an art very close to the lives of its audiences, above all an art unique in that it was conceived entirely in terms of movement and which joined together separate portions of physical reality into a whole which had a meaning quite beyond that of the sum of its parts.

Not that anyone, in 1906 and 1907, looked upon it as an art. To the men who were investing their money in it and the employees who drew their salaries from it, it was just a very well-paying thing, a novelty which magically retained its appeal through the years and was beginning to look like a staple commodity. They were too busy to think beyond that, and no one else in America cared. The newspapers noted the phenomenal profits to be made from films and the large audiences which attended them, but their readers saw in the cinematograph show only a small-time amusement, playing second fiddle to vaudeville and ten-twenty-third stock, and as little to be reckoned with in the great new era which, everyone was convinced, the twentieth century would inaugurate.

In Europe, they thought of the film very differently. It early became an interest of the *haute bourgeoisie* and those who entertained them, and these respectable people tried hard to find a good use for the new scientific toy. Like the Americans, the French realized that Melies had the secret, but they singled out another element of his work which Porter had happily passed by. Melies' idea of "artificially arranged scenes" was obviously drawn from the theatre and patterned after it. Ergo the film was a means of reproducing theatrical performances without the voice. This was marvellous! Now the provinces could see Bernhardt for a nickel, now Sophocles and Moliere would be introduced to the lowliest goatherd. A pretentious company was organized to sow canned culture through the world, and the Film d'Art (the name signifies the atmosphere in which this conception of the movies was born) straightway began recording all the important dramatic performances of the day. Most Films d'Art were straightforward records of the latest Comedie Francaise production, or similar, with the camera set up at the proscenium, waits between scenes, and the performers bowing to their unseen audience at the conclusion. Occasionally incidents from history or condensations of famous literary works were filmed in the same way, but the model was always the theatre, and though the Film d'Art may have been art to the snobs, it was never film.

It is hard to condemn these misguided people, for they were sincere in their desire to confer prestige and importance on the film. Nevertheless, the difference between their approach and that of Porter illustrates what I have already characterized as the twin tendencies to obscure and to discover the movies. Speaking generally France* focussed upon the movie's ability to reproduce a stage performance, an entirely irrelevant and secondary quality. America, on the other hand, had experimented and taken advantage of what meagre opportunities were at hand to discover the primary nature of the medium. Both tendencies, both con-

*And also Italy, where films were not only theatrical but operatic as well.

ceptions of the film, stemmed from Melies, and they were to meet again in the work of one man, D. W. Griffith, who from 1909 to 1920 bestrode the world of cinema like a colossus.

Griffith entered the movies as an actor in 1908, personally contemptuous of the medium and professionally fearful that his association with it would stamp him as a failure in the theatre. Had there been a theatrical film tradition in America like that of the Film d'Art, he might have felt more comfortable, for his background was that of the nineteenth century theatre and all its literary and cultural associations. But he was put to the task of turning out several films a month in the now-stereotyped Porter technique, with no opportunity at all to try to introduce the methods of the theatre. It soon became apparent that he didn't need them, that he had a style of his own which out-Portered Porter and made the entire industry rub its eyes. Griffith did not introduce many of the technical innovations long credited to him, but he did use them appropriately for the first time. In his hands, the close-up, the long-shot, trick photography, and the various forms of editing became instruments of imagination all compact. For several years he turned out little stories characterized by smooth and constant movement, an interest in themes as well as plot, and an eye for details which to other directors would have seemed irrelevant but which he managed to make into comment. By 1912, a great many people were beginning to recognize that the movie was something new in dramatic expression, and that here was a man who understood and used what was new about it. Oddly enough, it was the theatrical influence which he had largely discarded in his own films that moved Griffith to take the next step toward the movie as we know it today. The importation from France of filmed plays like *Queen Elizabeth* and from Italy of "historical" spectacles like *Cabiria* confirmed Griffith in his belief that the movies could do big things as well as little. After experimenting with a four-reel picture, *Judith of Bethulia*, he decided to take the plunge, and in 1914 began the production of *The Birth of a Nation*.

(To be concluded in our next issue)

What Is a Good Movie?

(Continued from page 6)

picture certain resources which are peculiar to it. The close-up, the camera angle, the moving camera which moves the audience instead of the setting are all vital mechanisms which the director may use to make the movie more interesting and compelling.

In addition there are certain technical resources of the motion picture growing out of the fact that the film may be cut and edited. Thus we get the possibility of montage effects which represent a powerful instrument for the creation of moods and subtle emotional responses from the audience. Double exposure, dissolves, animation, and other photographic tricks made it possible to liberate the creative imagination of the artist who can now achieve effects hitherto undreamed of in any art form. In this way the creative artist has a brush which in many senses is more versatile than that used by artists working in other media.

Turning from the entertainment film to the other types of films, many of the same considerations apply.

In my opinion a film does not have to be socially significant to be good. We like a good mystery story, a good musical, or a good western for its own sake, although there is no doubt that the film producers have neglected an interesting and stimulating entertainment field in their failure to deal with social subjects.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

- f GERONIMO—Preston Foster, Andy Devine, Ellen Drew. Original screen story and direction by Paul H. Sloane. A thrilling and exciting story of the last big Indian fight. Geronimo, the cruel Apache leader, out for revenge, is finally taken prisoner. The Indians are realistic and the story is not over-weighted with love episodes. It is cruel and stark and the acting excellent. Paramount.
- f HONEYMOON'S OVER, THE—Stuart Erwin, Marjorie Weaver. Based on play "Six Cylinder Love" by William A. McGuire. Directed by Eugene Forde. Our old friends, the newlyweds, living with a fast set beyond their means till they get wise, and the little woman helps the man back to his job. 20th Century-Fox.

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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FRANK WARD				

The Roaring Twenties

Screenplay by Jerry Wald, Richard Macauley and Robert Rossen from a story by Mark Hellinger, directed by Raoul Walsh, photographed by Ernie Haller, musical director Leo F. Forbstein. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The cast

Eddie Bartlett	James Cagney
Jean Sherman	Priscilla Lane
George Halley	Humphrey Bogart
Panama Smith	Gladys George
Lloyd Hart	Jeffrey Lynn
Danny Green	Frank McHugh
Nick Brown	Paul Kelly
Mrs. Sherman	Elizabeth Risdon
Henderson	Ed Keane
The Sergeant	Joe Sawyer
Michaels	Joseph Crehan
Judge	John Hamilton
Masters	George Meeker
First Detective	Robert Elliott
Second Detective	Eddie Chandler
Lefty	Max Wagner
Mrs. Gray	Vera Lewis

THE Twenties have roared so often on the screen in the last few years that you are inclined to listen for some new note in the noise, some addition to the old formula to make clearer why those years were so important and what they did to America. Or why do it again?

The most immediate and cogent "why" is that it gives James Cagney a chance to be his best, and that is always reason enough. But there is perhaps more than that—other prohibition-gangster films have been exciting reminiscences, assumptions that they were dealing with something safely past and done with: this one, though directly it seems to be pointing definitely backward, indirectly it cannot, in these days of an approaching war danger, help opening up a prospect of the future. Can't it, after all, happen again? Liquor

prohibition can be other things besides itself, it can stand for other mistakes. And what war and its disillusionments do to the individuals of one generation it is sure to do the individuals of another. And the desperations of unemployment don't need even a war to make them profound and fatal.

The Roaring Twenties, being written by Mark Hellinger, has a bit of the Broadway columnist's sentimentality about it, an almost nostalgic regret, under its hard-boiled manner, for the exciting glamor of a past day. But a March-of-Time commentator sternly keeps things in line, bridging the time gaps with cause-and-effect explanations that the audience might otherwise have to figure out for itself, or feel without figuring out. There are three Americans fighting in France, each reacting in his own way to the business of killing, each rushing into or revolting from the expression of violence for which a gun in the hand can so easily be a release. Then the three are back home, and the jobs that were to be saved for them while they fought for their country are not there; and prohibition has come: and instead of peace-time restraints upon the violence they have learned to give vent to, the quickest, easiest, least hum-drum way to get ahead is to go on being violent, with shooting as easy as spitting, and law-breaking smart and fashionable.

Then of course you have the regular gangster story, so familiar that its meanings have become as deeply buried in formula as in any cattle-rustling quickie. It piles up climax after climax, till it gets exhausting, and it has all been done so often before that one forgets these things have happened in life, not just in movies.

But if you can forget the rest of the gangster cycle, and look at this with a fresh eye, you can see that *The Roaring Twenties* is written with a lot of understanding, not only of people but of what social forces do to people; that Raoul Walsh, whose talent as a director has been frittered away on so many worthless things, has here found something he can do his best with; and that what was rampant in the Twenties did things not only to the Cagneys and Bogarts but to the Jeffrey Lynns and Rosemary Lanes. For here, in what might to the casual glance seem only a bit of love interest, are two decent people who might have been just innocent bystanders but might as easily, and were, innocent participants, caught up in the swirl of things and drifting on it, their own moral sense curiously blunted by the callousness about them.

Of course five-per-cent beer and repeal didn't bring salvation to America, nor did the wiping out of Nick and George and Danny and Eddie accomplish any curative operation on society. Other and deeper things were wrong, and still are, for all the triumphant optimism of the commentator. But where are you going to get a final solution of such problems—in the movies, the preachers, the government, or anywhere else?

The picture, in addition to good writing and better than good directing, has—best of all—a cast that is about perfect. Actors so easily and so often typed as Humphrey Bogart, Frank McHugh, Joe Sawyer and Paul Kelly, shed their typiness and become individuals again. Rosemary Lane, whether it is impersonation or just being herself, is inconspicuously exactly right, just as Gladys George is more conspicuously just right as a sort of toned down, more sympathetic Texas Guinan. And Cagney. Once more, and never so successfully, he takes every line, every movement, every bit of business, and makes them so utterly an expression of Eddie Bartlett that they seem not something he learned or was told to do but a spontaneous creation of his own. An eloquent and perceptive critic may sometime succeed in saying all that could be said about James Cagney as one of the great actors of our time, the unique embodiment of one of our time's

most tragic figures—the toughened (not tough) city boy who has to fight his way. But a volume of analysis, though it might tell more, could not show as much as seeing him in *The Roaring Twenties*.

J. S. H.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

Drums Along the Mohawk

Adapted by Lamar Trotti and Sonya Levien from the novel by Walter D. Edmonds, directed by John Ford, photographed by Bert Glennon, produced and distributed by Twentieth Century Fox.

The cast

Gilbert Martin	Henry Fonda
Lana	Claudette Colbert
Mrs. MacKlennar	Edna May Oliver
Caldwell	John Caradine
Reverend Rosenkrantz	Arthur Shields
John Weaver	Robert Lowery
General Herkimer	Roger Imhof
Joe Boleo	Francis Ford
Mrs. Weaver	Jessie Ralph
Mary Reall	Doris Bowdon
Adam Helmer	Ward Bond
Blue Jack	Chief Big Tree
Landlord	Spencer Charters
Christian Reall	Eddie Collins

MOST movies, when they picture pioneer life, go to the West, and the East Coast, where pioneering began in America, has been pretty well forgotten on the screen. This film does something to make up for such neglect, with its fine tale of settlers up in the Mohawk Valley in New York state, trying to build homes for themselves in the wilderness and bedeviled by a war they had little interest in, with the British and their Indian allies raiding them with torch and tomahawk and no help from the American congress.

It is a stirring and picturesque time, with the sturdiest of our forefathers and foremothers doing heroic things every hour of the day and night, without knowing it. That was an inescapable condition of their existence. The novel from which the film was made is rich in incident, character and atmospheric background, and a lot of people and happenings of course had to be left out to make a straight and dramatic movie plot from it. One misses the Indians, chiefly—



The attack on the fort in "Drums Along the Mohawk"

those pungent savages so different from Cooper's noble redskins. But they were an amoral lot who wouldn't fit into a picture that otherwise has all of the virtues and none of the tedium of a school text-book.

The story sticks to Gil Martin and his young wife, setting out for his farm in the wilderness and the new house he has built there for his bride. The swift adventures that followed give an impression of time being telescoped: the seasons that in the novel stretched so long from year to year manage somehow in the film to make the war seem much shorter than it was. The long terror—the long campaigns made by the men, the long waiting of the women at home—would have been interminable and repetitious on the screen, and they have been mercifully abbreviated. So there is a stirring variety of incident, and a fine variety of picturesque characters as well, circling about the central couple. And the young couple, for all their hardships, never grow old!

It's in technicolor, which of course means that Claudette Colbert's dresses are always lovely and clean, and the Indian's blanket as spotless as a cardinal's robe. It means, too, that the landscapes are beautiful, caught miraculously in seasonal colors. Some of John Ford's favorite effects are missing—his mists, and dramatic contrasts of light and shadow, which he had perfected so effectually without benefit of pigment. But the rains, the land in winter, the summer fields, are a new sign of what color is finding its way to.

Henry Fonda has become too identified with the lanky country youth to be anything but effective as the hero, and Claudette Colbert has just the right air of having come from a fine mansion in Albany to take up life as a frontierswoman. Edna May Oliver, who can clown with the best of them, stands out as a strong eccentric character under John Ford's direction, and Ford has also brought one of the best Dublin actors to be the practical pastor of the wilderness

flock in a flavorful combination of temporal and spiritual wisdom.

Drums Along the Mohawk belongs as American literature alongside Cooper, and as a film it ought to have a long life as a

vivid picture of early American history, when a whole countryside were fighting for national liberty when they thought they were only fighting for their homes.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J. S. H.

Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Queen Bette

QUEEN Elizabeth's greatness as a ruler of England is one of the fascinating objects in history. But its fascination lies not in assertion, nor in description, but in her special personality—she the daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn, the half-sister of Mary of England, the cousin of Mary of Scotland, and all that those blood relationships meant; her brilliance of intellect, her deviousness of femininity, her vanity and her health, and above all her devotion to England. It is such tremendous complexity embodied in one woman as seen understandingly against the tumultuous dangers of her time, her country and her enlarging world that makes her everlastingly interesting. Elizabeth as a portrait may be curious and compelling, but it is flat and lifeless seen by itself, without the things she had to fight against all her life, things outside herself and things within herself.

As in history so in this movie they have made of her, the figure of Elizabeth is dead or alive according to the forces that surround her. Essex, Bacon, Raleigh, Burghley and the younger Cecil—those men who were so close to the throne and to her—must all be vivid and vigorous to strike fire from her and light up her character. *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* has Bette Davis, but it has no men to give her any strength of support. She has brought a lot of intelligence and talent to understanding and delineating the ageing queen in her love-and-pride conflict with the pride and love of a handsome lord nearly a quarter-century younger. It is a tremendously complex and contradictory character, whose

behavior must seem incredible and bewildering without knowing what emotions caused that behavior and what those emotions were reactions to.

Maxwell Anderson's play about Elizabeth and Essex was a bit heavy on the stage, hardly attaining the psychological depths or the poetic heights it pretended to. Nothing in the way it has been brought to the screen has either lightened or illumined it. Everybody concerned has gone about his business very earnestly, and the result is handsome, meticulously authentic in costumes and sets, but superficial and often dull. Such an age as Elizabeth's might be pictured inaccurately or crudely, but it would still have truth in it if it had sweep and fire. Sweep and fire is what this production lacks completely, partly from the writing, partly from the leaden tempo of the direction, but most of all because there isn't a single virile character in the whole cast. Elizabeth wouldn't have been Elizabeth, nor her age the Elizabethan age, without strong men, and well-meaning gentlemen with nice enunciations and lovely costumes cannot serve as substitutes.

So Bette Davis's brave flight, so carefully thought out and so sympathetically executed, rarely gets free to reach the heights she aims at. It is too weighted down by innocuous actors who fail to give her the vigorous atmosphere she needed to soar in.

Queen Elizabeth, as a colorful ornament to a romantic drama, is one thing. As the center of a great age in English history she is another, and a picture of her in that aspect can't avoid being judged by pretty high standards. Such a picture is still awaiting some undiscovered Shakespeare or Marlowe of the screen.

J. S. H.

Of Monks and Men

TWO of the recent French importations, *Marseillaise* and *That They May Live*, have quite a little history behind them. *That They May Live* dates right back to the years immediately following the World War, when its silent predecessor, *J'Accuse*, reached the screen. Abel Gance, then a very young man, made *J'Accuse* a gruesome denunciation of wartime horror, aided by torn and mutilated actors from the French trenches. Now, after nearly twenty years, he has resurrected this forgotten silent and re-made it into its present form.

As we see it today we think inevitably of the problem of how far a director can safely go in the depiction of frightfulness without frightening away his audience or losing the force of his story in the revulsion of the movie-goer. *That They May Live* concerns itself relatively little with anything outside the starkest content of the story. Technicalities like story-construction, clarity of plot-development, continuity are given only the barest consideration. It is as though Gance were satisfied to let his basic material speak for itself, without anything but the minimum of help from its director.

The picture opens with some striking sequences of a poilu's life in the closing days of the War, showing vividly a grey and murky area of mud and destruction peopled by nerve-wracked, shattered soldiers clinging desperately to the hope that an end must come soon. Come it does, and with it what is virtually an end to the picture as a carefully planned story. What Gance tries to go on to tell us is how one soldier, driven half-mad by his own sufferings and the callousness of war profiteers, seeks to call the mutilated dead from their graves to march against all who would resort to war again. What he gives us is a strained, tortured tale in which emotion and suffering emerge without guidance and control, horrifying and often impressive in their poignancy, but dissipated in their lack of direction. It is Gance's good fortune that Victor Francen is there to play the leading role; without him the picture would fall in pieces like a frame without a king pin.

MARSEILLAISE is the second picture with a history, though the history is comparatively short. Renoir began work on it under the Blum regime in France and its production was supported by government subsidies. It was to be a great revolutionary epic, stressing the power of the popular will, and France's leading actors, actresses, directors, writers, et al., were to collaborate in completing it for the Paris Exposition.

None of these plans were carried through. The government subsidies ceased with the overthrow of the Popular Front, the making of the picture was taken over by Renoir alone, and the Exposition never saw it. What is showing in the United States today is far from being an epic and far even from being rated with the best French productions. Those who go to it expecting a "great" picture are likely to be disillusioned into ignoring what qualities the picture has.

For behind its weaknesses of misconstruction, misplaced emphasis and, often, naivete, the intention of its makers shines through. Sometimes the light is weak, often it is vivid and inspiring. There is enough to let us see that Renoir has tried to portray the spirit of a people in arms—to take us to their towns and villages, show us their homes and meeting-places, and trace their actions to simple, primitive sources. Because he is interested in the people alone he mercifully spares us the customary pomp and trappings of the average historical picture: his Court of Louis XVI is rich indeed, but it is a court of royal function and not a love-nest for white-toothed gallants.

Five men—Bourgoin, Douarinou, Maillols, Alphen and Louis—are credited with the camerawork and must share praise with Renoir for the way the camera links its episodes and scenes with a frequently sweeping eloquence. And the musical background, cleverly supporting the action with songs and compositions of the time, adds much to a picture that seeks the spirit of the revolution rather than the spectacle of revolt. Finally, mention must be made of Pierre Renoir and Louis Juvet in the parts of Louis XVI and the Mayor of Paris. They are the only "names" in the cast and they are unquestionably the best.

THE latest version of the life and loves of Rasputin outranks mere curiosity attraction simply because of its star, Harry Baur. *Rasputin*, directed by Marcel L'Herbier, is as much a Baur film as a Laughton film is Laughton's, and somehow or other Baur has managed to assume a physique more aesthetic and monkish than one would ever have thought possible from his stouter roles as Beethoven or the priest in *Carnet de Bal*. (This distinction will not exist, of course, for those who do not visualize monks as thin and priests as fat.) His Rasputin is not the devilish knave who cost MGM so much a few years ago, nor is it the humble, sweetly mystic that Rasputinists place on a wall between two candles. It is a mixture of the two that Baur has tried to portray, satisfying the thrill-seekers on the one hand and the censors on the other. In short, the whole is a summing-up of the high-spots of a double life, shifting smartly from piety to chorus girls and back again like an impish shuttle. The result is a series of personal studies made spectacular, and sometimes impressive, simply by an arrangement of sharp contrasts. Through it all moves Mr. Baur, at ease and at home whatever his activities of the moment—whether curing a nun of hysterics, strumming a balalaika in a questionable dive, helping the Tsar delay the World War, or being finally pushed beneath the ice filled to the gills with poisoned cookies and lead.

N. D.

Books on the Motion Picture

The Rise of the American Film, by Lewis Jacobs. Harcourt, Brace and Company, \$4.50.

MR JACOBS calls this a "Critical History," and he begins it, as his main title implies, with the American motion picture at its first contact with audiences, instead of going back over the long and troubled question, already so well covered, of how pictures in motion were conceived and who invented and perfected the means of making them and bringing them to view.

Yet there are other things vitally entangled

in the movies besides the mere pictures that came to the screen. There is the financial set-up that in its haphazard way resulted in a new form of mass production becoming Big Business (though this, too, has already been presented to a great extent by Terry Ramsaye: many a body will have to be buried and many a corpse disinterred, however, before the whole astounding story is completely told.) There is the technical matter of how the way of putting bits of picture together grew and changed, till the picture form of narration became the tremendously effective means of communication it is today. There are the social and moral forces—the customs, prejudices, interests and ideals—that at any given time were reflected in the films of the time, and in turn exercised their potent molding influence on the audiences.

Involved in all this are personalities, the directors, actors and obscurer craftsmen whose talents and energies were the forces that shaped and guided the development of the movies. Behind their talents and energies were their characters and outlooks which so largely determined the content, rather than the form, of what they did.

To delve into such complicated matters is a long and patient drudgery of research, in a field where the material is extremely difficult to find, and when it is found is in a thoroughly disorganized condition. Old films, records of old films that can no longer be found, in catalogues, trade journals, fan magazines and the erratic memories of individuals—from such scattered data must be dug the elements out of which to put together the history of the American film, and perceptive judgment must be behind the search. Mr. Jacobs has done the years-long searching, with an eye for the details worth bringing to light, and an excellent sense of how to put those details together in a significant pattern.

His analyses of directors, who have undoubtedly had the most influence on the form of movies, and even an influence on their content, are one of the most illuminating things about his record. For the first time the important work of Edwin Porter is pointed out and examined. Such men as Thomas Ince, Maurice Tourneur and other forgotten directors are recalled, less in detail

and with somewhat less appreciation of their excellencies that some of them deserve—probably because their films are next to impossible to examine, and entirely impossible to compare with the other films of their day. The peculiar significance of Cecil B. DeMille, whose long career and continued place as a director work against each other to make him seem a contemporary without historical importance—this Mr. Jacobs has recognized and evaluated. The man who has received the most attention is D. W. Griffith—the searching, meticulous and lengthy examination of him and his work makes him bulk almost disproportionately among the figures of movie-making, with such an early emphasis on *how* he did things and such a final post-mortem on *what* he did that he appears as an angel who turned into a devil: whereas he was always just D. W. Griffith, one of the strangest men among all the strange men who built up the American movie.

To review Mr. Jacobs' book thoroughly would almost be to write another book, so wide is its compass and so innumerable are its implications. A history of the American film is in many ways a history of America during the last forty years. That Mr. Jacobs has made inescapably apparent, and he has laid down broad lines for such a history, and in numberless places filled in the lines with body and color. It is as important a book about its subject as anyone has written, or is likely to write. Other gleaners in the field may pick up things he did not find, and others may reach more final judgments, but he has been a pioneer of invaluable quality.

J. S. H.

America at the Movies, by Margaret Farrand Thorpe. Yale University Press, \$2.75.

THE bright and engaging style in which this book is written is no disguise for the fact that an alert and penetrating intelligence is probing in all seriousness into the fundamental problems of America and its movies. There is a detached and civilized air, fairly ironic often, about the author's approach to the questions she sees at the heart of the matter, which probably comes from her effort to be fair to all sides and look at the whole thing from all its angles as a social phenomenon, and to keep her personal scale of

values scientifically discreet. Which doesn't at all lessen the value of her book, which ought to be read by anyone interested in why our movies are what they are.

Mrs. Thorpe, fascinated by the idea that some eighty-five million people go to movies in a week, has looked into the implications of that idea, with illuminating results. Why do so many people go to the movies? How do they pick what movies they will go to? What forces, either natural in people or created in them by a gigantic system of press-agentry, determine what they think they want to see? What, in turn, does what they see do to them? How do the producers come to make what they do? (It isn't whim or accident.) What about the people who want to reform the movies, either on moral or esthetic grounds or merely because they are cranks, and what do they accomplish? What is there to be taken seriously in the movies, either hopefully or pessimistically? How much are the movies an art, and how much do they use the other arts, or fit in among them? What effects have the movies as propaganda?

It covers a lot, in its deliberately light way—a deceiving lightness, which makes it pleasant and easy reading but doesn't prevent it from provoking some pretty deep thought.

J. S. H.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 10)

- f HOUSEKEEPER'S DAUGHTER, THE — Joan Bennett, Adolph Menjou, John Hubbard. Based on novel by Donald Henderson Clark. Directed by Hal Roach. A sprightly combination of farce and melodrama, clowning and poisoning, gangsters and caricatured newspaper men. Its appeal depends on one's taste in fun. United Artists.
- f IL SIGNOR MAX (Mr. Max)—Vittorio De Sica, Assia Noris. A bright little comedy about the Italian owner of a thriving newsstand whose profits enable him to take a holiday every year at a fashionable resort, where he plays the part of a society man-about-town. Recommended for Italian audiences, as it is not likely that the amusing dialog would be understandable to American audiences. (Italian production). Esperia.
- f LAW OF THE PAMPAS—William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Steffi Duna. Based on char-

acters created by Clarence E. Mulford. Directed by Nate Watt. Distinctly better than average Western, unusual attention being given to story, backgrounds, and characterization. Has fine scenic shots with Hopalong Cassidy playing a convincing part in unraveling a South American mystery. Paramount.

- f **LIGHT AHEAD, THE** — Helen Beverley, Isidore Casher, David Opatoshu. Adapted from the works of S. J. Abramowitz. Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. One of the best Yiddish-speaking films to be shown in this country, very well produced and full of the atmosphere of life as it was in Jewish-Balkan communities. While the main story concerns the love of a poor couple, an excellent picture is given of their many diverse fellow-citizens. May be too long and slow for American audiences; highly recommended for Jewish communities. Carmel.
- f **LITTLE ACCIDENT**—Baby Sandy, Hugh Herbert. Based on the play by Floyd Dell and Thomas Mitchell. Directed by Charles Lamont. A most amusing story of a baby that everybody loves but nobody wants. The baby "Sandy" is the center of attraction and Hugh Herbert is his usual funny self. Universal.
- f **MEET DOCTOR CHRISTIAN**—Jean Hersholt. Original screen story by Harvey Gates. Directed by Bernard Vorhaus. The popular radio character, a small-city doctor whose kindness, sense and skill are a strong influence in the community. Homey sort of picture, with likeable people in it. RKO Radio.
- f ***MILL ON THE FLOSS, THE**—Geraldine Fitzgerald, Frank Lawton, Victoria Hopper, Fay Compton. Based on the novel by George Eliot. Directed by Tim Whelan. A remarkable re-creation of George Eliot's famous novel done with moving simplicity and fidelity to the spirit of the original. Geraldine Fitzgerald heads a splendid cast which is admirably chosen. Recommended to schools and libraries for the fine picture it presents of English life in the early 19th Century (British production). Standard.
- m **MIRACLE ON MAIN STREET**—Margo, Walter Abel. Original screen story by Samuel Ornit and Boris Ingster. Directed by Steve Sekeley. A girl who is wanted by the police finds safety, courage and finally happiness when she adopts a baby. Columbia.
- f ***ON YOUR TOES**—Vera Zorina, Eddie Albert, Alan Hale. Based on musical play by Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart and George Abbott. Directed by Ray Enright. An unusually amusing story about a young vaudeville dancer and composer who falls in love with a Russian ballet dancer and gets hopelessly involved with her temperamental colleagues of the ballet. Mixes lightness with fine dancing quite successfully and results in being a pleasure to watch and a good bit of fun to laugh over. Warner Bros.
- f **PHANTOM STRIKES, THE**—Wilfred Lawson, Sonnie Hale, Louise Henry. Based on novel "The Ringer" by Edgar Wallace. Directed by Walter Forde. A typical Edgar Wallace tale—brisk, dramatic, with vivid characters—about the efforts of Scotland Yard to keep a threatened murder from happening. Good acting and good suspense. Monogram.
- fj **PRIDE OF THE BLUE GRASS** — Edith Fellows, James McCallion. Original screen story by Vincent Sherman. Directed by William McGann. A human and interesting (though the interest is largely juvenile) story of a boy who lived down an unjustified reputation given him by a weak father by training a blind horse to win one of the great steeplechases. Warner Bros.
- f ***PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX, THE**—Bette Davis, Errol Flynn. Based on the play by Maxwell Anderson. Directed by Michael Curtiz. The tragic story of a love between an aging queen of England and a lord of her court, in which pride and ambition and patriotism fought a battle on which hung the destiny of the country. Handsomely produced in technicolor, with another brilliant characterization by Bette Davis. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Recommended for schools and libraries. Warner Bros.
- m **REMEMBER?**—Robert Taylor, Lew Ayres, Greer Garson. Original screen story by Corey Ford, and Norman Z. McLeod. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. A clever comedy about a young man who stole his best friend's girl, full of originality and nonsense. Its success depends on taste—some will like it immensely, others will dislike it just as heartily. It is done for all it's worth—everything just right for those who enjoy its kind of thing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **RENA RAMA SANNINGEN** (Nothing But the Truth)—Eric Berglund, Ake Soderblom, Sikan Karlson, Tallie Sellmen. Based on story by Thorsten Landquist. Directed by Weyler Hildebrand. A Swedish version of the old story of the man who bets he can tell the truth for twenty-four hours, and the terrible complications that result. While its farcical situations are not likely to appeal to an American audience, it should be enjoyed by Swedish people. Direction is neat and snappy after a slow start. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f **ROAD BACK, THE**—Larry Blake, John King. Based on novel by Eric Maria Remarque. Directed by James Whale. A

re-issue of the picture showing what happened to the German boys returning from the trenches. The picture is brought up-to-date as a piece of propaganda against war. Universal.

m ROARING TWENTIES, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

m RENO—Richard Dix, Gail Patrick. Based on story by Ellis St. Joseph. Directed by John Farrow. A story of a young lawyer who made Reno famous for quick divorces and how his own marriage went on the rocks. Later in life he saves his own daughter from divorce. RKO Radio.

f SAGA OF DEATH VALLEY—Roy Rogers. Original screen story by Karen DeWolf and Stuart Anthony. Directed by Joseph Kane. His father shot and his younger brother kidnapped by the murderer, Roy Rogers returns fifteen years later to get his revenge and marry his childhood sweetheart. Republic.

f SECRET OF DOCTOR KILDAIRE—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Helen Gilbert. Original screen story by Max Brand. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. A medical secret—through which the young doctor banishes the troubles of an engaged couple. Pleasant and human, like all of this series. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f SHIPYARD SALLY—Gracie Fields, Sydney Howard, Morton Selten. Original screen story by Karl Tunberg and Don Ettlinger. Directed by Monty Banks. When the shipbuilders are thrown out of work in Scotland, they choose a Lancashire girl to help them out. Gracie Fields is the girl and she does the job with a lot of laughs and some good songs. Picture is weakened by a phony "American" character and garbled American speech here and there, but pulls through on the strength of its comedy. 20th Century-Fox.

m SOTTO LA CROCE DEL SUD (Under the Southern Cross)—Doris Duranti, Antonio Centa, Enrico Glori, Giovanni Grasso. Based on story by Jacopo Comin. Directed by Eugenio Fontana. The unusual setting of Ethiopia gives this picture most of its appeal, good use being made of the natural background and native actors. The story is not so new, being mainly the eternal triangle, but it is given fresh and novel twists by being laid among characters who are trying to build a new colonial empire. (Italian production). Esperia.

f TOO BUSY TO WORK — Jed Prouty, Spring Byington. Based upon "The Torchbearers" by George Kelly and "Your Uncle Dudley" by Howard Lindsay and Bertrand Robinson. Directed by Otto Brower. An amusing comedy of the Jones family who find outside interests more important than making money and keeping a home to-

gether. Florence Roberts as Granny Jones is excellent. 20th Century-Fox.

m TOWER OF LONDON—Basil Rathbone, Boris Karloff. Original screen story by Robert N. Lee. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. A historical melodrama of the exploits of Richard III, the infamous plotter who used any means to gain power, and his right hand henchman. The story is spotty, but holds the interest. Universal.

f 20,000 MEN A YEAR—Randolph Scott, Preston Foster, Margaret Lindsay. Original screen story by Frank Wead. Directed by Alfred E. Green. A story of one of several colleges training men for aviation, with the idea of turning out 20,000 men a year. Flying instruction and the men involved rather than romance of the conventional kind is its interest. 20th Century-Fox.

m *WE ARE NOT ALONE—Paul Muni, Jane Bryan. Based on novel by James Hilton. Directed by Edmund Goulding. A gripping story of a country doctor in England in 1914. Always kind, the doctor with a girl he has befriended becomes involved in a scandal and later in a murder trial. The entire cast is excellent and the production well directed. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Warner Bros.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- fj *AQUA RHYTHM (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A lovely and rhythmic exhibition of swimming. Eighteen girls in perfect unison. Paramount.
- f *BOOK OF BOOKS, THE—An admirably made documentary of instructional value showing briefly the history of Bible making and, in clear detail, the involved technical work that goes into the publishing of a modern Bible. Recommended for schools and libraries. Columbia.
- f BOWS AND ARROWS—Champion archer Howard Hill displays his wonderful dexterity with the bow. Columbia.
- f BUILDING OF BOYS, THE—Excellent summary of the work of the Boys' Clubs of America, showing their influence on the health and welfare of American youth. Columbia.
- f DOG IS BORN, A—Interesting brief history of German Shepherd Dogs from day of birth to maturity, showing the many roles they play. Paramount.
- f FOLK MELLAN FJALLEN (People of the Mountains)—An interesting survey of the lives and crafts of a section of Sweden, with narration by Prince Wilhelm of Sweden. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- fj FOOLS WHO MADE HISTORY NO. 1—The story of how Elias Howe invented the sewing machine. Columbia.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 68—Charlotte Amalie—Glimpses of the beautiful Virgin Isles. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 70—Saving the Diamond Backs—preventing the terrapin from becoming extinct. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 71—Strange American Animals—showing some queer animals of America. Universal.
- f HOLLAND AND THE ZUYDER ZEE—What the title says, attractively and intelligently presented. Columbia.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 2—Answers and questions based on the radio program. RKO Radio.

- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 3—The popular radio program brought to the screen. Very amusing. RKO Radio.
- f LET'S TALK TURKEY (Pete Smith Specialty)—How to carve turkey. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f MARCH OF TIME NO. 3, THE (6th Series)—Showing how the Department of Agriculture in Washington helps the farmer and what happens to farms during war time. Instructive and interesting. RKO Radio.
- f QUAIN ST. AUGUSTINE (Fitzpatrick Travel Talk)—Showing places of interest in the lovely old town of St. Augustine. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f *SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 1 (series 19)—A very interesting exposition of how movie players are made up. Columbia.
- fj SKI BIRDS—A Pete Smith Specialty, about skiing but with novel elements in it. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SPELEN I SPANGA (The Sports of Spanga)—Old-time Swedish games. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 69, NO. 70, NO. 71—Strange things, people and hobbies all over the world. Universal.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 1—Showing youthful girl-ranchers; Doctor who makes Damascus steel; art patterns made from trash; Olympe Bradna's hobby; railroad guard in Java; man who collects war relics. Paramount.
- f VALIANT VENEZUELA—A Fitzpatrick Travel-talk in color. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WINTER PLAYGROUND—Fine little short, showing the province of Quebec in the old days and comparing it with the winter playground for skiers it has become today. RKO Radio.
- f MUSICALS, NOVELTIES AND SERIALS
- f BUSY LITTLE BEARS—Charming study of baby bears at play. Interesting. Paramount.
- f COMMUNITY SING NO. 1—The favorite songs of Bing Crosby. Columbia.
- fj DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (Serial) Nos. 11-15—Ralph Byrd. Original screenplay by Barry Shipman, Ronald Davidson and Walter Miller. Directed by William Witney and John English. The G-Men are victorious, the villain is caught and Dick Tracey gets his reward. Republic.
- fj ICE CUTTER (Sportscope)—Ice Hockey. RKO Radio.
- f MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR—The National Philharmonic Society of America's rendition of The Merry Wives of Windsor conducted by Fredrick Feher. Paramount.
- f *SEE YOUR DOCTOR—Robert Benchley in a very funny anecdote about a man who got stung by a bee. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SWING HOTEL—Dancing and singing. Light entertainment. Universal.
- f WILLIAM TELL—A rendition of "William Tell" by the National Philharmonic Orchestra of the U. S. A. Paramount.
- fj ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION (Serial) No. 1—Reed Hadley, Sheila Darcy. Original screen story by Ronald Davidson, Franklyn Adreon, Morgan Cox, Sol Shor, Barney Sarecky. Directed by William Witney and John English. Laid in Mexico when Juarez was trying to keep the newly born Republic going, this picturesque serial concerns the efforts of a masked hero to keep enemies of Juarez from ruining his administration. Republic.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- f MOUNTAIN EARS—A novel cartoon about hill-billies. Columbia.
- f MOUSE IN A MILLION, A—An amusing cartoon, on the Belling the Cat fable. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj NEVER SOCK A BABY (Popeye the Sailor Cartoon)—Popeye has a terrible dream about his baby. Paramount.
- fj SCRAMBLED EGGS—Color cartoon. A mischievous little elf mixes up the birds' eggs and there is great consternation when the birds are hatched. Universal.
- fj SLEEPING PRINCESS, THE—Color cartoon. A satire on the old fairy story, very amusing. Universal.
- fj WICKY-WACKY ROMANCE (Terrytoon Cartoon)—The pretty mice on a South Sea island are nearly abducted by pirate mice. 20th Century-Fox.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

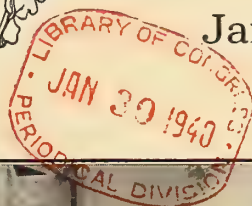
The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 1



January, 1940



Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh in "Gone With the Wind" (see page 19)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

- f AMAZING MR. WILLIAMS, THE—Joan Blondell, Melvyn Douglas. Original screen story by Sy Bartlett. Directed by Alexander Hall. A good comedy. Too busy working with the homicide squad to get married, Melvyn Douglas gets in wrong with Joan Blondell until she also gets the detective bug. Columbia.
- f BALALAIKA—Nelson Eddy, Ilona Massey, Frank Morgan, Charles Ruggles. Based on play by Eric Maschwitz, George Posford, and Bernard Grun. Directed by Reinhold Schunzel. A romantic musical story of old Russia and the prince who fell in love with a singer. A new attractive star, Ilona Massey. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f BARRICADE—Warner Baxter, Alice Faye, Charles Winninger. Original screen story by Granville Walker. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. The siege of an American consulate in Central China by Mongolian bandits, in which a man redeems his reputation as a foreign correspondent in the course of a romantic, exciting melodrama. 20th Century-Fox.
- f CISCO KID AND THE LADY, THE—Cesar Romero, Chris-Pin Martin, Marjorie Weaver, Virginia Field. Original screen story by Stanley Rauh. Directed by Herbert I. Leeds. O'Henry's gallant and picturesque adventurer temporarily adopts a baby, and a delightful one, to whom he leaves a goldmine after routing a set of hardy villains. Lively and amusing. 20th Century-Fox.
- m CITADEL OF SILENCE, THE—Annabella, Pierre Renoir. Based on the novel by T. H. Herbert. Directed by Marcel L'Herbier. Annabella as a Polish patriot in the Poland of 1913. Having escaped suspicion in an attempt to assassinate a Russian duke she marries a prison governor so as to be near her imprisoned friends and to plot their release. Polish liberty is the theme and is movingly handled despite a weak story full of unlikely coincidences. (French production). Film Alliance of the United States.
- f DAYS OF JESSE JAMES—Roy Rogers, Pauline Moore, Donald Barry. Original screen story by Jack Netteford. Directed by Joseph Kane. A good old melodrama of the west in the days of the notorious bandit Jesse James. Republic.
- f DESTROY RIDES AGAIN—Marlene Dietrich, James Stewart. Original screen story by Felix Jackson. Directed by George Marshall. Universal. See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 23.
- f EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT NIGHT—Sonja Henie, Robert Cummings, Ray Milland. Original screen story by Art Arthur and Robert Harari. Directed by Irving Cummings. A romantic comedy with a touch of melodrama and some skating—two newspaper men rivals for Miss Henie in the Swiss Alps. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FOUR WIVES—Lane Sisters, Jeffrey Lynn, Eddie Albert. Original screen story by Philip J. and Julius G. Epstein. Directed by Michael Curtiz. The maturer life of the "Four Daughters," in which babies and problems arise. Full of humor and sentiment and pleasant homey atmosphere, all of it enhanced by a remarkably effective musical score. Warner Bros.
- m *GONE WITH THE WIND—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 19.
- f *GREAT VICTOR HERBERT, THE—Allan Jones, Mary Martin, Walter Connolly. Based on a story by Robert Lively and Andrew L. Stone. Directed by Andrew L. Stone. An interesting story of Victor Herbert whether fictional or true to life. A story of the stage and the problems of actors. Beautiful music. Paramount.
- fj *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS—Based on Jonathan Swift's immortal tale. Directed by Dave Fleischer. A cartoon in technicolor. The adventures of a shipwrecked boy who is washed ashore in the land of the Lilliputians. There he is first feared and then loved by the little people, and finally he brings happiness to them. Recommended for libraries. Paramount.
- fj HENRY GOES ARIZONA—Frank Morgan, Virginia Weidler. Based on a magazine story by W. C. Tuttle. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. The melodramatic adventures, sprinkled with humor, of a broken-down (Continued on page 26)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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January, 1940

20c a copy, \$2.00 a year

Dr. A. A. Brill Elected Chairman of National Board Dr. George W. Kirchwey elected Chairman Emeritus

THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures takes pleasure in announcing the election of Dr. A. A. Brill as Chairman of the Board. It is also pleased to announce the election of its former Chairman, Dr. George W. Kirchwey, as Chairman Emeritus.

In assuming this office Dr. Brill stated:

"My acceptance of the Chairmanship of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures after seven years on its Executive Committee is a further expression of my interest in the motion picture itself and in the Board's program of activity dealing with the motion picture. I feel that motion pictures offer not only good entertainment, pleasure and relaxation, but also education. To be more explicit, I firmly believe that the movie is an excellent medium for mitigating the heavy burdens of

life imposed on us by the struggle for existence. In the movie we can identify ourselves with the hero or heroine, and after living through their hardships as depicted on the

screen, we attain fulfillment. For the time being we forget the struggle of inexorable reality and find solace, pleasure and knowledge in almost any movie house.

"Particularly am I interested in lending my support to the activity of the National Board in connection with the work with young people. So much of hearsay and so much of false belief based upon unscientific research lie behind many of the statements made regarding the effect of motion pictures on children, and children's reactions to motion pictures, that

a program designed to obtain true reactions through informal discussion by young people themselves deserves hearty endorsement.



Dr. A. A. Brill

National Board of Review Conference, Feb. 1st - 3rd, Hotel Pennsylvania, N. Y. C.

"Likewise, I am in sound agreement with the National Board in its opposition to censorship of the motion picture, and as one interested in the maintenance of a normal society I have so voiced my opinion. The normal or average person can read about law-breaking or see it in a play or picture without wanting to become a criminal. In this respect he is really much healthier than the reformer who wants to suppress everything because he doesn't trust himself. Contrary to the belief of some uninformed people, the average healthy person has the capacity to be his own censor. He has an ideal of conduct which controls his actions. It is, therefore, a mistake to pass special legislation under the guise of protecting us all. The average person can never become vicious or criminal as a result of moving pictures. Criminals are born, not made. As a matter of fact the movies, like plays, are really a valuable vicarious outlet for our primitive impulses and help to keep society healthy. The movies are especially useful in deterring from crime and cleansing our emotions because they reach everybody and reflect the problems of modern life in a way that everybody can understand.

"The theory and the application of the Board's field program of organized community activity for the study and support of the motion picture has my full interest, as it is a constructive program which has accomplished results since its inception in 1916. It gives all people, community leaders and picture patrons alike an opportunity to express themselves in a positive way regarding their attitudes toward and their attendance at motion pictures. The motion picture is a mass product and depends more than any other form of art on mass support. It can develop only through an organized effort to promote its development helpfully, fully, sympathetically, with the emphasis on the film that attains artistic merit. This is the belief of the Board behind this program, and one in which I concur."

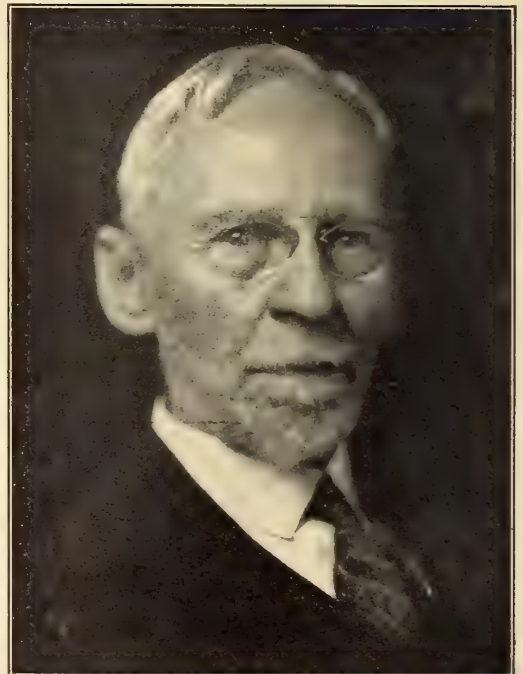
Dr. Brill became a member of the Executive Committee of the Board in 1933 after seven years of service on the National Council. Therefore, he comes to this office with a clear idea of the Board's work, and he brings to it a background of experience in his professional life which will make for un-

derstanding leadership of a program having to do with people and their attitudes regarding motion pictures as entertainment and education.

Dr. Brill was born in Austria, but came to America at an early age and was educated at the City College of New York, New York and Columbia Universities. Since 1903 he has been actively engaged in the practice of psychiatry and has held numerous important positions—among them that of chief of the psychiatric clinic and lecturer on psychoanalysis, Columbia University; lecturer on abnormal psychology and psychoanalysis, New York University; assistant professor of psychiatry, Post-Graduate Hospital; member of the Psychiatric Clinic in Zurich, Switzerland. He has served as President of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry, the New York and the American Psychoanalytic Association, and the New York Psychiatric Society.

DR. KIRCHWEY, *Chairman Emeritus*

It is fitting indeed that Dr. Kirchwey should be elected as the first Chairman Emeritus of the Board, for he has played a leading role in the affairs of the organization since 1926.



Dr. George W. Kirchwey

"I am honored and delighted," said Mr. Kirchwey, referring to his election. "I have always had faith in the Board. It seems to me to have detected long ago the social forces and their implications that are particularly related to the motion picture. We early projected a philosophy, renewed year after year, to the effect that any study of the motion picture must be expressed in a program, not of control, but of citizen participation; not of censorship but of the free enjoyment of the screen by all the people. To some the world is a drill ground with the drill-sergeant everlastingly in control; to others, the world is the field of experience, in which the winning of character through self-discipline is the great achievement. To the former of these, the moving picture, with its varied interpretations of life, is a constant menace. To the latter, the moving picture is a new opportunity for the liberation of generous emotions for the better understanding of life. Like all the aids to a fuller life, literature, art, music, religion, the movie has its defects. But these it is overcoming, and as it grows in grace, it will grow also in the strength of its appeal and in its service to the great community. I have been happy to be associated with the Board and I look forward to watching with it the continuing growth of the motion picture."

Dr. Kirchwey was admitted to the bar in 1882 and practiced for ten years in Albany, N. Y. He later became Dean of the Albany Law School and, following this, Dean of the Law School of Columbia University. He was Commissioner of Prison Reform, State of New York, from 1913 to 1914. From 1915 to 1916 he was warden of Sing Sing Prison. Since 1917 Dr. Kirchwey has been director of the Department of Criminology of the New York School of Social Work and is a member of the Committee on Criminal Courts of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York.

Among the other offices Dr. Kirchwey has held are: vice-president of the Prison Association of New York; counsel and director, Prison Inquiry Commission of New Jersey; federal director, U. S. Employment Service; general director, Pennsylvania Commission on Penal Affairs; chairman, Department of Jurisprudence, International Congress of

Arts and Sciences, St. Louis, 1904; president, American Peace Society; director, American Society of International Law; president, American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology; president, Welfare League Association, New York; director, National Society of Penal Information; member, American Bar Association. He was at one time Editor of Historical Manuscripts of the State of New York and is the author of many books on law and on crime and criminology.

Mrs. Griebel Joins General Committee



Mrs. Robert E. Griebel

WE are happy to announce the election of Mrs. Robert E. Griebel to the General Committee of the National Board of Review. One of the original members of the committee of the Motion Picture Bureau of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, Mrs. Griebel has been an active review member of the National Board since 1925 and for many years a member of the Board's Membership Committee. Her election to membership in the General Com-

mittee assures the Board of the cooperation of a loyal, hardworking personality.

Mrs. Griebe graduated from St. Joseph's College for Women, Brooklyn, and in 1922 became active in the Motion Picture Bureau of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae. She served from 1922 to 1935 as Secretary to this organization. A vice-chairman of the Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn and Educational Supervisor of the Britannica Junior for the Eastern District of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Mrs. Griebe is well known on the lecture platforms of the Parent-Teacher Associations and school as-

semblies. Believing that the motion picture, more than any other art, is dominated by the public, Mrs. Griebe has consistently emphasized the importance of discriminate movie-going. Building her public addresses on the phrase: "Shopping for Movies," she has tried to convince her audiences that for their own good and the good of the general public they should "buy" the best in movie entertainment and do their utmost to build up the numbers of discriminating movie-goers. We are assured that Mrs. Griebe's work and counsel within the General Committee will be of the greatest value to the National Board.

What Is a Good Movie?

The replies printed below are the last of a series of responses received from members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board.

Robert Giroux

A good movie, like any good work of art, has unity. If there are not many good ones, it is because the movies are the most difficult of all the arts in which to achieve unity. Their creator has to *fuse* so many elements—writing, acting, décor, music, speech, sound imagery, lighting, possibly color, movement, composition, rhythm—to list haphazardly a few of the "terms of the cinema" which critics have been discovering and delineating from good old W. K. L. Dickinson right up to Mortimer Adler. Furthermore, the movie artist has to wrest these elements from intricate machines and difficult temperaments. No wonder a good movie seems a much greater achievement than almost any other work of art.

I have assumed that we can speak of the "creator" of a movie, by whom I mean the director. Actually there are few individuals who control even a majority of the elements in a movie. Chaplin is unique in controlling *every* element. Most directors are relegated to the role of stage managers by the men in the front office; they are told whom to direct and in what way to direct them; they are assigned writers, photographers, technical assistants; finally their film is taken from

them and "edited" by someone unembarrassed by any connection with its making.

Where there is a work of art, there is always an artist. It is impossible to talk about the good movie without immediately facing the fact that the artist in the movies is prevented from working freely in his art. When the movies let directors develop, we shall not only know what a good movie is; we shall see one.

Otis Ferguson

Film Critic, The New Republic

THERE are more people eager with answers to any such question as "What is a good movie?" than there are who will try to tell you what is a good novel, painting, or bit of music—possibly because history has not had time to burn enough fingers. A good picture uses the resources peculiar to the form to achieve the same excitement of eye and ear and imagination that a good book gives its readers.

But who has defined a good book? As fast as rules have been laid down in literary history, someone has come along and blown them sky-high. We are more wary about books, and fall sensibly back on saying that they should have in some proportion the good, the true and the beautiful; that they should be honest and interesting and complete in themselves.

The question should be: "What must a

good picture have that nothing else has?" All but the unteachable have been taught that movies can be real, unreal, half-true or plain fantastic, that they can take the absurd seriously and vice versa, that they can move at different levels of intensity and speed, and even advocate something you have no stomach for. Still, if there is that basic sincerity and talent in the workmanship which keeps you awake, and moved to admiration or pity or wonder in some kind of audience partisanship—they're good, why argue?

I have seen enough pictures by now to know that I do not know what specifically a good picture should do or be. I know what I like and don't like and can say why. But that is an after-the-fact knowledge, and I am profoundly sure of only one thing, which is this: the only rule of what a good picture should be is written on celluloid by the man who makes a good picture.

Having admitted which, I can go on to the didacticisms everybody carries around in his little black bag. Although successful pictures have been taken from books, plays, history and legend, the story written for the screen by someone with a knowledge of its demands and possibilities is the best bet for a good picture (the weakest department, in Hollywood and the world over, is the writing department—not so much because of weak writers as of their accepted status as weak men).

And the story with the widest divergence from the classic Unities—which is to say the story that allows this tremendous art-form to stretch to its full length—will be the Most Likely to Succeed, other intangibles being equal.

And the director who has got the confidence and allegiance of his writers, cameramen, cutters and casting authority (all other departments follow, of course, but at a distance) is the director who will make the best use of this best material.

(And the director who has got himself a big and awesome name will of course steal the beat on everybody, though this freedom to roam as he wills is not guarantee that his film won't be an artistic turkey, as witness the case of Capra and Eisenstein.)

And let us keep the actor in the picture as one of its essentials: in spite of all other

devices and pictorial symbols he is the dramatic expression of the human symbol, in any dramatic sense. By the choice and on-the-set direction of actors good pictures have been ruined before this, and incompetent ones made so-so.

Movies are the most highly collaborative of all the arts. We should always say that over ten times before giving them a prescription. And then we should say it over ten times. After which we should come to the main principle about movies.

Movies are the most fabulously expensive fabrication of all the arts, and thus must appeal to millions of people outside of the immediate family of the producer. By subscription, endowment or direct subsidy one or several small groups may finance a fine montage study of this or that. But the industry as a whole—which makes these outer fringes possible—must sell itself to millions of common people or go bust in the end. This highly collaborative machine, in all its expensive complexity, was built on the plain principles of mass consumption. Without that consumption and its inevitable restrictions, the machine would slow down and then stop and then rust and then eventually movies (except as made by rich amateurs for friends of the family) would vanish from the earth.

A good movie should be an amalgam of all the bright devices of its manifold tributary arts—the story and the people and the background of music and sound as recorded, the scene and action as photographed. Its key men will be the writer, the director, the cameraman and cutter, and the key man of all of these should be the director, though he often isn't. And the general effect of a good movie, plainly enough, is motion. Not only action in its purest sense, from pony express to the airmail, but a progression of images in the camera eye—things, people, and background moods—that will lift the whole thing into a dramatic life and movement of its own. For while interest and even patience tire very quickly, the eye never seems conscious of fatigue. The progress toward grace and flexibility of the camera and the cutting room has been a slow trial-and-error process, yet we accept these wonders of illusion today without conscious

thought. We would not, unless it were a set task, so much as notice the actual mechanics of picture-action: in the single shot, with the camera moving forward or back on a dolly, up or down on a boom, or up or around on its own axis; or people moving across the focus. We don't notice the motion achieved in the perspective itself by the matching of different angles on the same thing. In the scene as a whole, we are not consciously aware of the constant shift of image, from the speaking face to the effect of speech on those listening, from trees to a fireplace to the drawer a letter lies in, or to cows across the road, or smoke, or trains passing. And in the sequence, there is the unobtrusive effect of contrasts in light, speed, long, medium and close shots, of sound and silence and dramatic emphasis, or tension. As a matter of fact, it takes a whole range of technical mastery to make even a bad picture.

And when someone comes along to match his meaning with this proper use of cumulative tradition in art, we get a good picture. We don't have to worry about whether it is good, or how: if it is good we know it as a magic carpet. And a magic carpet, by simple definition, is something beyond the laws of reason, high and strange.

James Shelley Hamilton

Secretary of the Committee on Exceptional
Photoplays

LET'S see where we will get by trying to define a moving picture in its simplest, most literal terms. It may sound obvious, but perhaps it will cut through unessentials to what distinguishes a movie from everything else. Back in 1913, before the word "movie" had grown into respectable usage, the Century Dictionary didn't try to define it: it merely spoke of an "optical effect" called a "moving picture." Let's see.

A moving picture, or motion picture, is a series of photographs devised to be projected successively upon a screen to give the illusion of movement.

That much of a definition is crammed with implications. It implies the tools employed—camera and projector—and implies also that a motion picture is something to be

looked at, which implies a spectator or audience. And that makes the motion picture a form of communication.

It happens that the photographs used in a movie are made and printed on a substance called film, for convenience in running through the camera and through the projecting machine that throws the photographs upon a screen where they can be looked at. Methods have been discovered which make it possible to record other things on film for projection, such as color and sound, and still other things may come in the future, such as a third dimension, or even smell. But these are only additions, however important they may be in widening the communicative effect of the pictures to which they are added. Fundamentally the motion picture is something to look at, composed of photographed pictures presented to look like photographed motion. That is its essential and permanent difference from other forms of communication, oral, narrative, dramatic or lyrical.

What else a moving picture is, depends on who makes it, and for what purpose. Take for granted that the mechanical elements are as perfect as the mechanical tools can produce, which of course involves a highly complicated equipment. There is an additional human element, of supreme importance, in the maker and in the audience.

The maker has his photographs: the camera has supplied them, and all sorts of material may have gone into them—people, things, places, ideas. But they are nothing but individual and separate photographs (each by itself would be called a "still") until the maker—to go back to the definition—"devises" the "series" in which they are to succeed one another. Only when that arrangement of separate pictures has been made can these lifeless stills be projected on a screen to look like something alive to an audience. This process of arrangement, the vital thing in movie-making, is variously called editing, cutting or montage. It is what makes a movie move. It is also the individuality of its maker.

Movies are made for many purposes—to entertain, to inform, to instruct, to persuade. Whatever their purpose to do they must consider their audience—the seeing human ele-

ment without which a movie is a lifeless roll of film in a tin can. Being a form of communication a movie must be clear to its audience, instantaneously clear, because a movie audience has no time to go back and pick up lost threads. A movie can risk not being liked and still be a movie—though it had better be liked or it will soon be put back in its can—but it can never risk not being understood if it wants to get out of its can at all. When a movie has made itself understandable for its audience it has—abstractly speaking—done its job.

Other people have written about what goes into a movie—the subject matter, the writing of the script, the actors and their acting, and all that, and how it is put into a visible order for the camera to photograph. These things, which are so vital to the final result, are still no part of a movie till they have been put on a strip of film, and put there in such a way that every least bit of value in them counts in its proper place for its effect on the screen.

And what is a good movie? I would say it is the movie (as per above) that successfully does what it sets out to do. That is, it must express in movie terms what its maker means, and interest the audience for which it is intended. It can entertain, like the movies most people like best to see; inform, like newsreels and what they call documentary films; instruct, like films that get into schools and places of education instead of into theatres; or persuade, like films that openly or indirectly try to sell something—motor-cars, social angles, politics or what not: call them advertising or propaganda.

Beyond being merely good, of course, a movie can extend itself as far as the maker of it can extend his abilities in the direction of his aim, and reach great heights of emotional and philosophical appeal: various aspects of what that may be have already been discussed by other people. Probably it is from these extensions beyond what is merely good that movies of some permanent value come, movies that have in them something that keeps them alive from one year or one decade to another, movies that will speak to the future as meaningfully as they do to the people who see them fresh from their makers' hands.

Book Reviews

Foremost Films of 1938, by Frank Vreeland.
Pitman Publishing Corporation, \$3.50.

THIS book is designed as a standard reference, to serve for the movies as Burns Mantle's yearly "Best Plays" does for the theatre, a rejuvenation of the idea that Robert Sherwood followed several years ago. Its year, 1938, is an arresting reminder that 1938 is already not only a year ago, but in many ways definitely in the far past. Mr. Vreeland's essays on the year in pictures, on production in Hollywood and in Europe, already sound like history, and some of it history that never really happened.

The book contains detailed synopses of ten films, with a great deal of their dialogue, shorter but valuable paragraphs on practically every other picture of the year, and information about motion picture awards, revivals and people in the movie world who have died. Mr. Vreeland's list of ten is arbitrary, as he admits, depending on copy-right and availability of scripts as well as the author's personal judgment. People seem to be more and more eager to read movie scripts and authentic facts about the production and content of movies, and this book inaugurates a record that will become more and more valuable for the future historian who needs to look closely at the minutiae of a year's output before he can move away from it and see its essentials in perspective.

How They Make a Motion Picture. By Ray Hoadley and Roman Freulich. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. \$2.00.

Movie Workers. By Picture Fact Associates. Harper. \$1.00.

BOTH these books are simple guides for the film fan who wants a glimpse into the workshops of Hollywood. Both depend largely upon photographs to illustrate their material and are written in a non-technical, popular manner.

How They Make a Motion Picture is the more adult of the two books. It can be picked up and enjoyed by anybody, and while satis-

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Fifty Years of Films

By RICHARD GRIFFITH

This is the second and final installment of an article by the Film Correspondent of The Los Angeles Times

II.

TWENTY-FIVE years after its making, *The Birth of a Nation* is still a "mystery" film, for Griffith's working methods were spontaneous and impulsive and it is a question whether the master knew what he was doing when he made this film of films. In those days Griffith used to say that he got his ideas of narrative structure from the disjunct novels of Dickens and Thackeray. But the film technique he inaugurated here is not only more flexible than the novel but different in kind. Already Griffith had discovered the fact that the fundamental unit of film construction is the single shot, and to this discovery he now added the idea that each shot must apprise the spectator of one fact, thought, one feeling only. The shot stayed on the screen only long enough to communicate its single impression; it was then succeeded by another at the precise instant when the attention of the spectator naturally shifts. The individual shots build into a "scene," which includes all the action occurring at one place within a stated length of time. Scenes build into sequences and sequences, the longest film units, comprise the film itself. In *The Birth of a Nation* the succession of shots, both *within* the individual scene and *among* the scenes themselves was governed, not by plot or chronology as in the play and novel and hitherto in the film, but by *theme*. Scenes and sequences were developed, not one after another, but side by side, with inter-cutting between two or more scenes, reference backwards to sequences already concluded, and even an occasional reference forward to sequences which had not yet been developed. The entire film therefore consisted of a series of themes played contrapuntally against one another, whose sum was the theme of the picture itself.

By this basic method the film was ad-

vanced from a means of telling a story to a medium for historical, social, or philosophic speculation. In *The Birth of a Nation* it was all three of these things. "It is like writing history with lightning," said Woodrow Wilson of the picture, and people all over the world agreed. To Americans it had a special meaning, this film which went beyond the story of a family's experiences in the Civil War to the totality of the war itself and all that it meant to America of disintegration and healing. Griffith had made its powerful method a vehicle for his passions and prejudices, and its social viewpoint evoked as much controversy and condemnation as praise. This roused Griffith. He felt the importance of his achievement and believed in its legitimacy; the attacks leveled against him seemed arrant persecution. To set his accusers at naught, he embarked on an even vaster theme than that of *The Birth of a Nation*. *Intolerance* (1916), the formal masterpiece of the movies, was the result.

The Birth of A Nation had dramatized one event in the world's history. *Intolerance*, using the same basic methods, illustrated a general theme with historic events wherever and whenever they occurred. The world of chronology, of physical time and space, was destroyed in this movie and its director stood as master of a new universe governed by the development of an idea. Four stories of the world's history were told not successively but at once, their relationship to one another determined by the extent to which they developed the theme of intolerance. In the picture, "history pours like a cataract across the screen", as Iris Barry says, and the effect was, still is, overpowering. Too overpowering for audiences unaccustomed to, and uninterested in, abstract ideas. The picture was disliked, perhaps just because it brought the screen to sudden maturity, and Griffith, frightened at his own audacity in forsaking public interest, plunged into the making of potboilers in an effort to recoup his position as universally recognized master.

For he had begun to have competitors. While he was first establishing himself, a knockabout vaudevillian named Mack Sennett had begun a school and style of movie making. Based on traditional slapstick, the Sennett comedy used movie magic to set aside the laws of the real world and invoke the world of wish, where a man might steal, rob, murder, commit all the forms of violence without ill effects upon himself or anyone else. Most fine film comedy has stemmed from Sennett, the style being used by each director or comedian for his own purposes but remaining in essence what Sennett had made it — a means of abrogating natural laws for humorous purposes. The first to vary and develop it was a comedian who entered movies under Sennett himself. Charles Chaplin was at first merely the butt of slapstick jokes, one laughing stock among many. Suddenly audiences found him funnier than anyone else in movie comedies, funnier than anyone in the world. As time went on their laughter was not so hearty; they found this little man who always got the worst of it more pathetic than funny. Today the world's comedian is a tragically enigmatic figure, a man who supremely possesses the common touch yet feels a barrier between himself and his fellows.

I say that *Chaplin* is a tragic figure, yet his films are not tragedies. With due allowance for advance in photography and lighting, they are still Sennett comedies in essential nature. In no important way has Chaplin advanced film technique; he has simply used that technique or a part of it, to develop and deepen an idea about human beings. As such, he is the supreme artist of the screen but not a film pioneer, for he has contributed nothing to later directors that was not already inherent in the Sennett form when he made it his own. Only indirectly and accidentally has he influenced the movies, and that in a way he would never have consciously intended.

Since it was the figure of Charlie that people loved, and since that figure was the central theme of all his pictures, it overshadowed and became more important than the films themselves. It was *his* latest picture that people went to see, regardless of its title, content, or treatment. He was a star.

Already the star system had been established by the success of Mary Pickford and others, and Chaplin's great boxoffice appeal convinced producers that the star was the most important element in a film, ensuring its success when all else was doubtful and chancy. By 1918, Chaplin and Pickford reigned supreme and the star system dominated the industry. Directors, hitherto the chief creators of film, were then faced with the problem of devising a technique which would give the star full play. The solution they arrived at was obvious, inevitable, disastrous. A star could achieve prominence by displaying the virtuosity of his acting. Acting, then, was the most important film value, and its only tradition was that of the theatre. Without more ado, films took the easy path they have so often wandered into, and returned to an approximation of stage technique, glorifying the star and his talent and suppressing all the talents and values uniquely associated with the screen. The policy was vastly successful — has continued successful to this day — but its effects were not apparent for awhile. Only, as the 1920's progressed, people began to realize that no new figures were rising to match Chaplin and Griffith, that movies were standardized, predictable, almost all alike. Despite the thematic novelties offered by producers — jazz, sex, the comedy of manners — this feeling continued, and audiences looked for a deeper novelty, the recognition of real creative effort in films.

From 1920 to 1926 they found them increasingly in foreign films. For the European film industry, prostrate during the war, experienced a spirited revival after 1919. In Germany and France, the experimental tendency which then informed all the arts led men of taste, intelligence, and experience to take the film seriously, to attempt to discover its laws, above all to say something through it that could not be said so well otherwise. France gave us several fine and brave films during this period, but production there was individual, spasmodic. The German genius for organization and efficiency, on the other hand, speedily produced a highly centralized film industry equipped with every technical facility, and ready to conquer the world — for the spirit behind the

German film revival was violent reaction against the agonies of defeat and determination to reassert Germany's cultural position. The historical films made by Lubitsch during the early part of this era were obviously intended to impress the rest of the world with Germany's technical resources, her inventiveness, her capacity for tasteful spectacle. As the influence of experiment in painting, literature and the theatre was felt, new values emerged. The German film of the early 1920s was obviously in debt to painting for its emphasis on pictorial values, and to literature, German literature, for its mysticism and fantasy. But the universal mood inspiring such various films as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Warning Shadows*, *The Last Laugh*, *Faust*, and *Variety* came not from art but from life itself. Bravely the German film-makers tried to conquer the world market and thus achieve a national triumph. But they could not escape the despair of their own people; despair weighted their films and yet was their life, giving rise to all their beauty and meaning and forming their technique. The moving camera, that godlike "eye" which meandered through all these films, searching the dark places of the human soul, was a device which could only have been invented by artists who, as men, had been driven into themselves by the harshness of the world outside.

Such pictures could not succeed in the international market. They didn't appeal to the jazz age, and the German film industry tottered toward bankruptcy. But they had impressed thoughtful Americans, and Hollywood, envying their technical facility, bought up the technicians. Murnau, Lubitsch, Dupont came over to forget German darkness in the California sunlight. Perhaps they forgot, perhaps they didn't; certainly their films in this country lacked personal passion. But they did raise the standard of taste, and out in Hollywood, side by side with the commercial movie which exploited stars, there developed a kind of international film style which promised much. It made use of all the experiments of the past to produce pictures which dramatized simple human themes with power and insight. As these films attracted attention, the director began to re-emerge as a factor requiring consideration.

Erich von Stroheim became one of Hollywood's problems, unable to come to terms with boxofficialdom or to resolve the structural problems of his films, but creating uneven masterpieces along his meteoric way. Von Sternberg, Vidor, other young men, began to give promise. The Germans did as well as could be expected on California soil, and Mauritz Stiller and Victor Seastrom brought from Sweden something of the lyricism and moral interest of their native industry, which flourished immediately after the war and declined in the middle twenties. All these influences and tendencies conspired to force a renewed attempt to rediscover the film medium itself, and though the effort was rather eclectic it was nevertheless made, even by the money-minded producers. An especial stimulus were the important Soviet films which began to arrive in America in 1927 and 1928. *Potemkin*, *October*, *Mother*, and *The End of St. Petersburg* forced upon Hollywood the unpleasant fact that the editing technique of Griffith, neglected or slighted all these years, was the basis of the film's real power. Perhaps this fact was unpleasant because the ideas of the Soviet films did not please Hollywood, and maybe Hollywood was shrewd enough to see that the startling impact of the Soviet films, their thoughtful refinement of Griffith's methods, derived from an impassioned desire to use the film to the limit of its capacity for the glorification of communism. Technique and purpose were here inextricable, and the faint of heart shied away. But those who loved the film realized that these Soviet pictures, nearly all of them masterpieces, had instigated a deep necessity to re-examine film technique from beginning to end. Enthusiastically the aesthetes set out to do so, and Hollywood was awaiting the results of their theorizing and experiment when sound came.

The panic that followed was catastrophic, and for nearly two years no one in films knew what he was doing or why. By 1930 the smoke had cleared away and revealed the carnage — awe-inspiring, horrific. Reputations had vanished, commercial empires had tumbled, but worst of all the film itself had disappeared and had been succeeded by something at first unrecognizable. When observers looked twice they saw the triumph

of the Film d'Art conception of the movie, the photographed play complete with voice, the film itself reduced to the status of a recording instrument, and the art of the moving picture, that art which had been fought for, even died for, gone — entombed.

The feeling of horror which ensued has never left some of us. Lamenting the silent eras, two recent historians of the films have said: "There were quite ordinary films in which the extinguishing of a lamp at some window, a figure emerging from the mist pale and formless as a drowned body, the bend of a river revealing a road between two rows of trees, furnished us with that unique sensation of shock which a glimpse of an unknown world provides". This is lost. The "unique sensation of shock" comes rarely these days, and never in "quite ordinary films." It ain't necessarily so, of course. A theory, a rationale, of the sound film has been worked out to the satisfaction of all, sound has proved a benison in a thousand unexpected ways, and even the virtue of silence can be recaptured at will when an individual film requires it. And yet, the picture is not the same. The extraordinary hopefulness, the energy, the capacity for experiment which distinguished the earliest and the latest days of the silent film are with us no more. No director has risen since the talkies whose name can be mentioned with, or near, those of Griffith, Chaplin, Pabst, Stroheim, Murnau, Eisenstein, Pudovkin and a host of others long since forgotten. Pictures still entertain and move us, but their qualities are not the same. They are big films, or well-acted films, or tastefully lit and photographed and caparisoned. They are interesting because they touch topics of the day or catch a current fashion. They are "important" because they tell us news. But never any more, and not for ten years now, are they simply, authentically films.

Those of us who felt this blamed sound as long as we could. Seen in retrospect, a deeper reason becomes apparent, a hidden factor obscured by its coincidence with the panic of sound. It is standardization. Films today are turned out by formula, cut to pattern. They resemble plays not because sound forces them to, it doesn't any more, but because it is easier to copy the stage than to

dig out film form for yourself. They lack personal passion because no one person has very much to do with them; they are a product of the conference room, the studio-factory, where the individual touch is discarded in favor of the tried-and-true device. They avoid controversy because it is easier and safer and altogether more pleasant to do so. In short, they do not matter any more, either to those who make them or those who see them.

We need not blame ourselves for this, it is no particular product of the attitude of our times. It is the menace that has threatened films ever since their power to please became known and their marketability stable. In early movie days, experiment was common because it was necessary. Formulas were still young and pliable, they could yield to the new idea. Griffith could lose a fortune on *Intolerance*, von Stroheim could persuade a studio to film *Greed* because no one was sure what would hit and what would flop. "Take a chance, it might be what the public wants" was still the motto. But once success was stabilized, once a profitable film could be turned out by the factory method, experiment was discarded. It was commercially unnecessary, it actually endangered profit. With the impulse to experiment went nearly everything else. Technique declined, became flat, conventional, familiar. No one had the urge to find a new way of saying things in film because nobody had anything new to say. Or if he did, he battered himself in vain against the machine. Men who believe in themselves and their talent have indeed made the effort, tried to beat the game. They are still trying, but only a few of the old ones are left. As Paul Rotha has said, the history of film experiment is a funeral cortege of murdered hopes.

And now, in 1940, what of the audience? Is it satisfied? Neither Hollywood nor the Bijou Dream cares much, as long as the money comes in. But it is harder to keep the factories running on schedule these days, and producers are beginning to ponder. The wisest and most forward-looking of them had reached conclusions similar to mine long before they were recorded here. Some of them know, too, that the effort of the

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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RICHARD GRIFFITH
HENRY HART

JOHN A. MCANDREW
MARY B. MILLER

FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON
VIRGINIA PATTERSON

RUSSELL POTTER
FREDERIC M. THRASHER

FRANK WARD

The Year's Best

FOR a great many years the National Board has prided itself on the fact that its appraisal of motion pictures is a matter of collective opinion rather than individual preference. In its everyday reviewing of new productions the Board's decisions are made by a dozen or more committee members whose opinions are entirely uninfluenced by pressure of any kind. When the time for choosing the "Best" pictures arrives precisely the same procedure is followed, with the difference that hundreds and not dozens of members are participating. The choosing is done by three separate groups: The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, a group of twelve men and women interested primarily in the artistic development of the motion picture; the Review Committees, consisting of members who seek to reflect as far as possible the most popular preferences; and the 4-Star Clubs, whose choice is representative of the many junior members of the National Board. Artistic, popular and junior—these three categories between them should manage to satisfy the most diversified audience.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays has again chosen what it considers to be the best film it has seen during the year (December 15th, 1938—December 15th, 1939), no matter in what country this film was produced. This year's choice has been the American production *CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY*. Naturally this same picture heads the list of the Ten Best English-language films—which includes films from the British studios as well as the American.

The list of the Ten Best English-language films follows in the order in which they were ranked:—

1. Confessions of a Nazi Spy
2. Wuthering Heights
3. Stagecoach
4. Ninotchka
5. Young Mr. Lincoln
6. Crisis
7. Goodbye Mr. Chips
8. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
9. The Roaring Twenties
10. U-Boat 29

1. *CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY*, written by Milton Krims and John Wexley from an original story by Leon G. Turrou, was produced by Warner Bros. under the direction of Anatole Litvak. The principal actors were Edward G. Robinson, Francis Lederer, George Sanders and Paul Lukas. The picture was important in many ways, but chiefly for the brilliant manner in which factual material of topical importance was assembled into the shape of a gripping, dramatic story of our times. Only rarely does a motion-picture succeed in combining powerful topical material and cinematic brilliance in direction, writing and editing, and even more rarely does a whole cast so share in the spirit of the production as to make their audience forget to think of them as stars. An achievement of this kind well warrants the distinction of being chosen the outstanding picture of the year.

2. *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*. Adapted by Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht from Emily Bronte's novel. Directed by William Wyler, produced by Samuel Goldwyn and released by United Artists. Stars



Edward G. Robinson and Francis Lederer in "Confessions of a Nazi Spy"
best film of 1939

Laurence Olivier, Merle Oberon, David Niven, Geraldine Fitzgerald. A close runner-up for first place on the list. Reviewed in the National Board of Review Magazine as "the best that Mr. Goldwyn has ever made." It is hard to think of any famous novel that has been brought to the screen with greater skill and sensitiveness, having full respect for the original and yet comprehending the need of the screen for intelligent adaptation. Writing, direction and acting are all of the same high caliber.

3. **STAGECOACH.** Written by Dudley Nichols from the story "Stage to Lordsburg" by Ernest Haycox. Directed by John Ford, produced by Walter Wanger and distributed by United Artists. Stars Claire Trevor, John Wayne, Andy Devine, John Carradine and Thomas Mitchell. Another striking success for the team of John Ford and Dudley Nichols. Using fairly ordinary

Western material they prove that a re-birth of Westerns is eminently possible in such practised hands as theirs. Made with a sweeping vigor that holds the interest unflinching and employs the soundest fundamentals of movie-making throughout.

4. **NINOTCHKA.** Directed by Ernst Lubitsch, produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Screen play by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder and Walter Reisch, from an original story by Melchior Lengyel. The best satire of the year, showing Garbo in a new and delightful light and full of the wit and cleverness of Ernst Lubitsch. Free enough of malice to be humanly entertaining, while full of pointed humor and polished sophistication.

5. **YOUNG MR. LINCOLN.** Written by Lamar Trotti, directed by John Ford. Produced and distributed by Twentieth Cen-

tury-Fox. Stars Henry Fonda and Alice Brady. John Ford to the front again, this time with a moving, human story that he has handled in the calm, easy manner that the principal character demands. Despite occasional over-polish the picture presents young Lincoln's life in Springfield in a fine and simple way, scarcely ever losing its straightforward interpretation of a great man's youth. Unquestionably Henry Fonda's outstanding performance.

6. **CRISIS.** Commentary written by Vincent Sheean and spoken by Leif Erickson. Directed by Herbert Klein. Distributed by Arthur Mayer. An eye-witness film of happenings in Czechoslovakia between Hitler's seizure of Austria and the Munich Agreement. A forceful and tragic documentary, outstanding among films of its type.

7. **GOODBYE MR. CHIPS.** James Hilton's famous novel adapted by R. C. Sheriff, Claudine West and Eric Maschwitz. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Directed by Sam Wood and starring Robert Donat and Greer Garson. Chosen for its charming portrayal of the growth of a young, naive schoolmaster into a mature, beloved institution. While its appeal is almost solely to the heart-strings its technical qualities are on a high level. Brings a lovely new star to the screen in the person of Greer Garson.

8. **MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON.** Written by Sidney Brechman from a story by Lewis R. Foster. Directed by Frank Capra. Starring James Stewart, Jean Arthur and Claude Rains. Produced and distributed by Columbia Pictures. An eminent successor to Capra's "Mr. Deeds," exploiting many of the human traits and foibles that helped make the latter so popular. Its qualities have a wide, democratic appeal.

9. **THE ROARING TWENTIES.** Directed by Raoul Walsh from Mark Hellinger's original story. Screenplay by Jerry Wald, Richard Macauley and Robert Rossen. Starring James Cagney and Priscilla Lane. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros. A fresh and exciting study of the why and wherefore of the bootlegger in the 'Twenties.

Jimmy Cagney is especially notable as the "forgotten" soldier of post-war years swept into gangsterdom despite himself. A nice combination of documentary and adventure.

10. **U-BOAT 29.** An Irving Asher (English) production, distributed by Columbia. Story by J. Storer Clouston. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger; scenario by Roland Pertwee. Directed by Michael Powell. Chosen as one of the year's best melodramas, packing a meaty and thrilling story of espionage into a compact, splendidly directed picture. Conrad Veidt is most impressive as spy and U-boat commander.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays also selected the five foreign-language films that it considered the best of the year. These were, in order of preference.

1. Port of Shadows.
2. Harvest.
3. Alexander Nevsky
4. The End of a Day
5. Robert Koch

1. **PORT OF SHADOWS.** Produced by Cine-Alliance, distributed by Film Alliance of the United States. Screenplay by Jacques Prevert from the story by Pierre Mac Orlan. Directed by Marcel Carne. Starring Jean Gabin, Michel Simon and Michele Morgan. A grim and tragic history of a hunted deserter from the army who tries to flee abroad from a French port. Rich in the atmosphere and drama of the waterfront and deeply poignant in its character portrayals. A splendid cast of unforgettable characters from whom director and cameraman extract the best.

2. **HARVEST.** Produced, adapted and directed by Marcel Pagnol, from the novel by Jean Giono. Starring Gabriel Gabrio, Orane Demazis and Fernandel. Distributed in the United States by the French Cinema Center. This story of regeneration of land and of those who till it has a natural beauty and simplicity that stamp it as an exceptional picture in the fullest sense of the word. Its people and its countryside are re-created with a fluent ease that should delight audiences of any country.

3. **ALEXANDER NEVSKY.** Written by Sergei Eisenstein and Peter A. Pavlenko.

Jean Gabin
and
Michele Morgan
in
"Port of Shadows"
best
foreign language
film of
1939



Directed by Sergei Eisenstein and D. I. Vassiliev. Produced by Mosfilm and distributed by Amkino. The first of Eisenstein's talking pictures to reach this country. Done in the "grand" tradition, with individuals little more than symbols and the camera concentrating on mass effects and wide open landscapes. Highly impressive at its best moments.

4. THE END OF A DAY. Original story by Charles Spaak and Julien Duvivier. Directed by Julien Duvivier. Produced by Regina, distributed by Juno Films. Starring Michel Simon, Louis Jouvet, Victor Francen. A sympathetic and penetrating study of the inmates of a home for aged actors. Their individual failures, ambitions, triumphs and nostalgic recollections are laid bare with a frankness and understanding that gives the picture a strongly human appeal.

5. ROBERT KOCH. Screenplay by Gerhard Menzel and Josef Cremers. Directed by Hans Steinhoff. An Emil Jannings-Tobis production, distributed by Ufa. Starring Emil Jannings and Werner Krauss. The first German film to reach the "best" list for some years. The story centers around the struggles of Dr. Koch, discoverer of the tuberculosis bacillus, and ranks easily with the best medical pictures from other countries. The famous Jannings-Krauss team of the silent days is here in all its glory.

The Committee considered the following screen performances worthy of special praise: (These preferences are listed alphabetically)

James Cagney in *The Roaring Twenties*

Bette Davis in *Dark Victory* and *The Old Maid*

Geraldine Fitzgerald in *Dark Victory* and *Wuthering Heights*

Henry Fonda in *Young Mr. Lincoln*

Jean Gabin in *Port of Shadows*

Greta Garbo in *Ninotchka*

Francis Lederer in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*

Paul Lukas in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*

Thomas Mitchell in *Stagecoach*

Laurence Olivier in *Wuthering Heights*

Flora Robson in *We Are Not Alone*

Michel Simon in *Port of Shadows* and *The End of a Day*

The Review Committees of the National Board, representative of some hundreds of members, made the following selections on the basis of popular appeal:

1. Goodbye Mr. Chips
2. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
3. Ninotchka
4. Pygmalion
5. The Old Maid
6. Wuthering Heights
7. Dark Victory
8. Juarez
9. The Wizard of Oz
10. Love Affair

The nation-wide 4-Star Clubs, which are the junior field groups of the National Board, have made their annual selections for the year ending December 1st. These groups invariably make their selections a fortnight before the adult committees so that there can be no question of their being influenced by older people's opinions. Members of the Clubs range in age from 9-17 years. Their choices, in order of preference, follow:

1. Goodbye Mr. Chips
2. The Old Maid
3. Wuthering Heights
4. Stanley and Livingstone
5. Pygmalion
6. The Wizard of Oz
7. Dark Victory
8. Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
9. Drums Along the Mohawk
10. Beau Geste

It is no doubt true that with children as with their elders only the more thoughtful, or those who through belonging to a club or

association have been made accustomed to thinking out their reactions and registering them as judgments, go to the trouble of making out such lists as this. But that does not mean that these boys and girls are essentially different from other boys and girls of their age, in their tastes or emotional reactions. The notable thing about this list, as with similar lists in previous years, is that, unless it were labeled, it could not be distinguished from a list made by older people. Probably one reason for this is that children get more education from movies than grown-ups to whom the movies do not mean so much, and education inevitably leads intelligent people, whether children or not, to more and more discrimination and to a progressive liking of better things. The boys and girls who made these selections are average children with all sorts of homes and backgrounds. Their preferences indicate something significantly promising about the movie audiences of the future.

The following break-down of the vote into the choices of boys and girls of different age groups may have a special interest for those who would like to compare tastes.

BOYS (9-13 years)

The Wizard of Oz
 Beau Geste
 Drums Along the Mohawk
 Goodbye Mr. Chips
 The Old Maid
 Stanley and Livingstone
 Four Feathers
 Gunga Din
 Wuthering Heights
 Nurse Edith Cavell

GIRLS (9-13 years)

The Wizard of Oz
 The Old Maid
 Goodbye Mr. Chips
 Stanley and Livingstone
 Nurse Edith Cavell
 Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
 Dark Victory
 The Rains Came
 Babes in Arms
 Alexander Graham Bell

BOYS (14-17 years)

Goodbye Mr. Chips

(Continued on page 26)

Gone with the Wind

Screen play by Sidney Howard, from Margaret Mitchell's novel, directed by Victor Fleming, production designed by William Cameron Menzies, photographed by Ernest Haller, musical score by Max Steiner, produced by David O. Selznick, distributed by Metro Goldwyn Mayer.

The Cast

At Tara, The O'Hara Plantation in Georgia

Brent Tarleton	George Reeves
Stuart Tarleton	Fred Crane
Scarlett O'Hara	Vivien Leigh
Mammy	Hattie McDaniel
Big Sam	Everett Brown
Elijah	Jack Williams
Gerald O'Hara	Thomas Mitchell
Pork	Oscar Polk
Ellen O'Hara	Barbara O'Neil
Jonas Wilkerson	Victor Jory
Suellen O'Hara	Evelyn Keyes
Carreen O'Hara	Ann Rutherford
Prissy	Butterfly McQueen

At Twelve Oaks, the Nearby Wilkes Plantation;

John Wilkes	Howard Hickman
India Wilkes	Alicia Rhett
Ashley Wilkes	Leslie Howard
Melanie Hamilton	Olivia de Havilland
Charles Hamilton	Rand Brooks
Frank Kennedy	Carroll Nye
Cathleen Calvert	Marcella Martin
Rhett Butler	Clark Gable

At the Bazaar in Atlanta

Aunt "Pittypat" Hamilton	Laura Hope Crews
Doctor Meade	Harry Davenport
Mrs. Meade	Leona Roberts
Mrs. Merriwether	Jane Darwell
Rene Picard	Albert Morin
Maybelle Merriwether	Mary Anderson
Fanny Elsing	Terry Shero
Old Levi	William McClain

In Aunt "Pittypat's" Home

Uncle Peter	Eddie Anderson
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Outside the Examiner Office

Phil Meade	Jakie Moran
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At the Hospital

Reminiscent Soldier	Cliff Edwards
Belle Watling	Ona Munson
The Sergeant	Ed. Chandler
A Wounded Soldier in Pain	George Hackathorne
A Convalescent Soldier	Roscoe Ates
An Amputation Case	Eric Linden
A Dying Soldier	John Arledge

During the Evacuation

A Commanding Officer	Tom Tyler
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During the Siege

A Mounted Officer	William Bakewell
The Bartender	Lee Phelps

Georgia After Sherman

A Yankee Deserter	Paul Hurst
The Carpetbagger's Friend	Ernest Whitman
A Returning Veteran	William Stelling
A Hungry Soldier	Louis Jean Heydt
Emmy Slattery	Isabel Jewell

During Reconstruction

The Yankee Major	Robert Elliott
His Poker-Playing Captains	George Meeker
	Wallis Clark
The Corporal	Irving Bacon
A Carpetbagger Orator	Adrian Morris
Johnny Gallagher	J. M. Kerrigan
A Yankee Business Man	Olin Howland
A Renegade	Yakima Canutt
His Companion	Blue Washington
Tom, A Yankee Captain	Ward Bond
Bonnie Blue Butler	Cammie King
Beau Wilkes	Mickey Kuhn
Bonnie's Nurse	Lillian Kemble Cooper

THE word about *Gone With the Wind* — if you haven't heard it already — is that it is about on the same level as the novel from which it was derived. It is exceptionally long, as the book was, and it isn't likely to disappoint those who liked the book, who number so many that no one else counts very much. If as a book it was a great novel, as a movie it is a great picture. Need greatness be defined? Obviously all the time, effort, talent and money that have gone into the making of the picture were employed to satisfy a certain public, the phenomenal multitude of readers who made the book one of the astonishing successes of the century. The movie had to tell the same story to the eye and ear that the book told in printed pages, and its success as a pictorial narrative is the only fair thing to judge it by.

There is an intermission in the middle of the picture (mercifully, because sitting still so long is physically onerous no matter how interested one may be), and there are those who think the film would have been better if it had ended just there. That would have been a logical enough ending in a way, if the story had been only about what the war did to Scarlett O'Hara, the determination that it led her to. But there is another interest than that — how did she carry out her determination? And what, on the one hand, became of her infatuation for Ashley, and on the other hand what came of that strange combination of antagonism and attraction be-

tween her and Rhett Butler? Of course, after another ten or twelve reels, the end is still uncertain, but there is nevertheless the satisfaction of watching that fascinating cat-and-dog conflict between Scarlett and Rhett for a while. It was probably never-ending.

The adaptation of so much material to the screen was a tremendous job. Sidney Howard did it remarkably well, keeping the multitude of characters in good perspective, all in their relation to Scarlett, yet each one clear and individual. The story itself, though Scarlett is always the center of it, has a broad beginning, with the bitter plight of Georgia and the Yankee army steadily advancing. Gradually it converges, its emotion and landscape narrowing, till it becomes all Scarlett and Rhett, and the other people closely involved with them. And it always keeps moving.

Victor Fleming, in his direction, has been content to tell his story as clearly as possible, with no fancy work or lingering on "touches". When the story calls for something impressive he does it, as in the scene in the railroad yard when Scarlett picking her way among scores of wounded soldiers lying on the ground, who look like thousands, suggests as much of the devastation of war as a terrific battle scene would have done. Or when Scarlett shoots the marauding Yankee, or when Mammy (so magnificently played by Hattie McDaniel) leads Melanie up the stairs to the room where Rhett is brooding over his dead child, and in a single scene sums up all the woe and despair that has filled the house for days. It is an achievement to have kept so long a narrative from never flagging, or getting wearisome.

The casting is another stroke of excellence. It was an inspiration to give the part of Scarlett to an unknown actress, unassociated with other parts, and Vivien Leigh is completely Scarlett O'Hara, with no aura of other characters about her. Everything about her is triumphantly right, just as with Clark Gable, for whom the part of Rhett Butler might have been especially written. Olivia De Havilland embodies the gentleness and nobility of Melanie without becoming over-sweet, just as Barbara O'Neill, in her brief appearance as Scarlett's mother, embodies the dignity and aristocratic refinement of a lady who

is the mistress of a great southern plantation. Hattie McDaniel and Butterfly McQueen have vividness and depth as two of the slaves. The whole enormous cast is full of people who do excellently what they have to do in filling out the picture.

Faults could be found if one were looking at this film merely as a motion picture of Georgia in the war and reconstruction days; that it leaves too many important things untouched, that it has no historical perspective, that it provides no ethical or social comment on its characters or events, finally that it is still a novel more than it is a motion picture. But none of those things were intended, or really to be expected. It is enough that Margaret Mitchell's novel should have been put on the screen so satisfyingly for its millions of readers.

J. S. H.

(Rated *Exceptional*)

We Are Not Alone

Screen play by Milton Krims and James Hilton from James Hilton's novel, directed by Edmund Goulding, photographed by Tony Gaudio, produced by Hal B. Wallis for Warner Bros., distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

Dr. David Newcomb	Paul Muni
Jessica Newcomb	Flora Robson
Gerald Newcomb	Raymond Severn
Leni	Jane Bryan
Susan	Una O'Connor
Dawson	Henry Daniell
Major Millman	Montagu Love
Sir William Clintock	James Stephenson
Sir Guy Lockhead	Stanley Logan
Judge	Cecil Kellaway
Tommy Baker	Douglas Scott
Archdeacon	Alan Napier
Mrs. Patterson	May Beatty

JAMES HILTON, whom so many people adore and whom some can't abide, has had a singularly happy time at the hands of the movie makers. Frank Capra chose *The Lost Horizon* for his second and most elaborate venture into films with "significance," then *Goodbye Mr. Chips* was made into a film so appealingly that, English as it was, it was taken straight to the bosom of American movie goers. *We Are Not Alone* has fared perhaps best of all.

Probably because it has more substance to it, in the first place. It touched pretty deeply

*Paul Muni
and
Jane Bryan
in
"We Are Not Alone"*



into those springs where ordinary human living finds its source—those mysterious interactions of people in a family, a husband and wife, parents and a child, with domestic forces on the inside and social forces on the outside working upon them; the emotions of friendship and love and jealousy; and finally the tragic effects of hate, personal hate and mass hate. It moves in the mood and pace of tragedy, because everything happens because people are what they are: the one fortuitous event that turns ordinary troubles into fatal ones is one of those accidents which fate, and not a mere novelist's contriving, seems to shake out of its box because it was there in the box to be shaken out: if the mother hadn't hidden the little boy's toy he wouldn't have broken the bottle of deadly pills, and if she hadn't made him so scared of her he wouldn't have put them so hastily back in her bottle of medicine.

It all happens in a doctor's small household in an English village, the doctor one of those friendly, rather fussy men who is always mislaying personal things and always aware of the essential things in other people; his wife, with her headaches, her whalebone ideas of propriety and domestic discipline, and the singular fatality about her of having petty things she does with the most respectable of motives work back on her like a punishment; the sensitive little boy, so lovingly understood by his father, so terrified of his stern mother; and the grim servant, with her loyalty so curiously mingled with suspicion and malice. Into this household is taken a pathetic immigrant girl from Austria to be a companion and nurse for the boy, little more than a child herself, and she becomes radiant and happy there till gossip intrudes: she has been a theatre dancer, she once, when ill and alone, tried to kill herself. Swift on this

disaster comes the threat of the war, and an outburst of hatred of foreigners in the village: the doctor decides the girl must be sent home to Austria before war is actually declared and he hurries her off for a night train. But those pills the wife is always taking for her headaches, and the fatal other pills the little boy has accidentally put in the wrong bottle—the doctor and the girl are faced at the station with an accusation of murder.

So all the harmless little incidents of the doctor's kindness to a friendless girl rearrange themselves, in the murder trial, into an iron pattern of guilt and crime, and there is no last minute explanation, no turning up of the broken bottle, to clear them.

The picture creates, from the beginning, the sort of atmosphere that makes you trust it and give yourself up to it, certain that it will keep to its quality, without false notes and mis-steps in its incidents or characters. Narrative though it essentially is, it has been written so that it is always visually dramatic, and directed with an excellent sense of how to keep it moving in the peculiar way in which screen stories have to move. Edmund Goulding knows how to make you sit up with a start at some arresting arrangement of the objects before his camera—such as catching the servant lurking in some shadow so that you are sure it must be remembered for some future significance, or that stunning instant when the little boy stands up in his bed and looks at his mother shutting the door to face him, an instant that sums up to the eye everything that has gone before and foretells the essence of everything that is to come: the high dramatic moment of the film.

All the parts are in more than competent hands. Paul Muni may give the effect of over-elaborating his part with fussy little movements and business, but it all adds up to something that in the end you find has revealed an inner man. There apparently has to be a speech at the end, in the Pasteur-Zola-Muni tradition, touching on cosmic things, but perhaps that takes some of the sting out of the futile tragedy of it all, with some vague intimation that there are more important things than personal tragedies. Flora Robson gives a magnificently subtle performance, somehow conveying the tur-

moil and torture of a woman inescapably imprisoned in her own narrowness. And Una O'Connor is in her way just as good, managing to make you forget a long list of somewhat similar characterizations, in a cockney servant who is something deeper than voice and looks. But the pleasantest memory the picture leaves is Jane Bryan, with the impression she gives of not acting but simply being, and the sunny way she blossoms under understanding and kindness. And a word must be said for the unusually sympathetic way in which the boy has been presented.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J.S.H.

Robert Koch

Screenplay by Gerhard Menzel and Josef Cremers. Directed by Hans Steinhoff. An Emil Jannings-Tobis production. Distributed in the United States by Ufa Films.

The Cast

<i>Dr. Koch</i>	Emil Jannings
<i>Virchow</i>	Werner Krauss
<i>Sister Else</i>	Viktoria V. Ballasko
<i>Fritz von Hartwig</i>	Raimund Schelcher
<i>Frau Koch</i>	Hildegard Grethe
<i>Dr. Gaffky</i>	Theodor Loos
<i>Dr. Loeffler</i>	Otto Graf
<i>Dr. Wetzel</i>	Peter Elzholtz
<i>Frau Goehrke</i>	Hilde Koerber
<i>Goehrke</i>	Josef Sieber
<i>Patient</i>	Bernhard Minetti
<i>Kaiser Wilhelm I.</i>	Dr. Prasch
<i>Herr v. Kossin</i>	Paul Bildt
<i>Frau v. Kossin</i>	Elisabeth Flickenschmidt
<i>Teacher</i>	Paul Dahlke
<i>Landrat von Hartwig</i>	Paul Otto
<i>Rechnungsrat</i>	Rudolf Klein-Rogge
<i>Stuebecke</i>	Walter Werner
<i>Michalke</i>	Jakob Tiedtke
<i>Bismarck</i>	Friedrich Otto Fischer
<i>Direktor der Charite</i>	Karl Haubenreisser
<i>Professor Bergmann</i>	Eduard v. Winterstein
<i>Frau Paul</i>	Lucie Hoefflich
<i>Herdsmen</i>	Karl Hannemann
<i>Netschmann</i>	Bernhard Goetzke
<i>Kruhlke</i>	Karl Platen
<i>Aktenhelfer</i>	Scramm-Dunker
<i>1st. Scrubwoman</i>	Gertrud Wolle
<i>2nd. Scrubwoman</i>	Charlotte Schultz
<i>Reichstag Attendant</i>	Leopold v. Ledebour
<i>1st Assistant to Virchow</i>	Josef Reithofer
<i>2nd. Assistant to Virchow</i>	Paul Hildebrandt
<i>Menzel</i>	K. Wagner

FILMS with a doctor-hero seem to have proved irresistible to producers the world over; they are part of an almost international contemporary tendency to glor-

ify the triumph of the individual will over the mockers and skeptics of the herd. This country has produced a steady stream of such heroes for a number of years; scientists, doctors, writers, explorers, popular leaders, all framed in solitary glory against the sky and descending to fight the upholders of outworn beliefs and dusty traditions. As a rule these heroes are selected from battles that were fought and won in the past; in this way a "progressive" aura is able to grace the production, while no offense can be taken by the reactionaries of today.

Robert Koch follows closely in this tradition. It was made in Germany, where the leader-principle is the accepted thing and lends itself readily to a story patterned along Hollywood lines. For the Hollywood influence is indisputably there; in the conventional approach to the doctor's trials and struggles, in the delineation of his virtues and the pig-headedness of his enemies, in his unfeeling "shock-cure" of a hysterical lady, and in the final "trial" scene in which he is vindicated and his enemies bowed down. Where the film differs from the conventional is in its building up of its chief personalities, its frequent selection of moments and episodes that really carry significance and finally in the splendid battle of personalities between those two old maestros of the German film, Emil Jannings and Werner Krauss.

It is Jannings who overshadows the whole of the first half of the film. As the struggling, obscure country doctor, surrounded by a poor, ill-fed peasantry by day and a mess of test-tubes by night, he stands like a tower of strength in every scene, the big man fighting not so much against enemies as against his own vast problems. With his assistant beside him he sits in his drab, lamp-lit room eternally testing the mixed pigments that will some day blend to reveal the tuberculosis bacillus; out in the snow and woods by day he tries to teach the rudiments of health to the children at the village school. When the great moment of discovery arrives at last the scene changes to Berlin, where the battle is less against disease than against the entrenched opposition of his fellow doctors.

Here is where Werner Krauss enters the picture, a goat-bearded, doddering oldster

who reminds one of the reactionary parliamentarians so beloved by the satirists in the Soviet film. His characterization is admirable, the more so in that his opposition to Dr. Koch is not of a fighting kind but an obtuse and deadly stubbornness that determines its possessor to wear blinkers no matter whether the heavens fall. The resulting conflict between the two men is striking and dramatic: Koch slowly and relentlessly marshalling new friends around him and blocking his enemy's exits one by one; Virchow steadfastly refusing to accept defeat even in the dramatic climax when the bacillus slides are laid out under the microscopes for his own eye to examine.

So many years have passed since a German picture rated inclusion in the year's Foreign Best that it is likely only a local audience will get to see *Robert Koch*. This would be a pity, for it is not only Emil Jannings' single Tobis production for 1939, it is also the best production to come out of Germany for a long time.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

N.D.

Good Old Western

DESTRY RIDES AGAIN might be the Western to end all Westerns—God forbid! It sums up so sophisticatedly so much of the incident and quality of Westerns, with almost a faint tone of parody that never, however, drowns out the essential character and excitement of its story, that in the end it can be taken as a delightful joke, or a knowing commentary on one of the oldest and most persistent types of the movie. Or simply, as it will be taken for the most part, as a rattling good picture.

What can be said of a Western except that it is good, middling or poor? There is the perennial plot of the least pretentious ones—the stranger who comes along to save the girl's ranch for her. And above that level it becomes merely a question of what slight new quirk of plot or characterization can be given

it, and whether the director is doing a routine job or having a good time. *Stagecoach* was a superb example of a director and writer taking familiar material—just a stagecoach journey with all the trimmings, including cavalry and Indians—and giving it fresh and vivid life by peopling it with familiar types presented as new individuals and keeping the action interesting and exciting. *Destry Rides Again* does something of the same sort of thing, but dispensing with soldiers, Indians and even a love story. It is mostly a dance-hall-saloon story, with its singer, gamblers and bad men, and a new angle provided by a young sheriff who doesn't believe in shooting. It is the old cleaning-up-the-town idea with a new twist, a Mr. Deeds sheriff who brings a different approach to his job, but doing the job with all the effectiveness of a Bill Hart. And perhaps the tough dancehall queen with a heart not without its streak of gold—perhaps she loved him. But conventional romance is treated with refreshing off-handedness in this fast and uproarious kaleidoscope of action.

Most of the peculiar piquancy of this film comes from seeing two unfamiliar figures among all the good old stock types—Marlene Dietrich doing a gay parody of herself in *The Blue Angel*, and James Stewart, a Mr. Smith going to a rough old-time Bret Harte town instead of to Washington. Marlene flounces around with great gusto and sings in that whiskey sublimation of contralto that is more fun than any Metropolitan songbird. Stewart is drawly and slow-motoned, and always being bamboozled, but you know that in the end he is sure to unleash a streak of cunning and quick action and confound everybody. In the background such people as Una Merkle, Mischa Auer, Charles Winninger and Brian Donlevy are stepped up a notch or two in typiness to make the general mixture fresher than usual.

It's a movie that is fun partly because the people who made it seem to have had a lot of fun doing it. George Marshall is an old veteran of Westerns, and Joseph Pasternack (so entirely associated with utterly different things) seems to have put a new life into him so that he frisks through the old familiar paces like a colt. J.S.H.

Hands Across the Channel

IT takes at least a war to stir the French and English into thinking of one another as spiritual buddies; they have spent too many hundreds of years singing sarcastic songs about one another's less fortunate generals and campaigns and have built up quite a literature and joke-stock probing food, love-life, morals and capacity for honest thinking as prevailing across the Channel. So when a third power becomes their common enemy and they are obliged uneasily to consider one another's virtues we must expect to find the wheels of cordiality a bit rusty from disuse and perhaps a little self-conscious at being asked to function at all. In retrospect it seems, in fact, that allies, once the storm of war is gone, are far more ready to give the sympathies of their art to the enemy than use it for tightening the bonds with their friends. We have had our *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Grand Illusion*, but we have had to wait a long time for the present offering *Entente Cordiale*.

Entente Cordiale has built itself up on the writings of one Frenchman who has really believed in an Allied tie — André Maurois. It has chosen as its hero one Englishman who shared the same belief — Edward VII. No other English monarch, before or since Edward, has ever approached France in quite the same spirit, without thinking of it as a delectable addition to his own property or as a convenient refuge from the disapproval of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Edward VII went there because he loved it; no one in Paris ever handed him lists of moral virtues to learn by heart or instructed him in Teutonic efficiency.

It is this angle of the building up of an entente cordiale that the French film-makers have stressed. They have overcome the criticism of making their English hero appear too French by emphasising that this is what he wanted to be. Their intention being to show Edward as virtually the creator of the allied tie, they have comfortably gone to work on their subject, using him as an intermediary whose personality is readily grasped by their writers, actors and audience.

The result has many of the drawbacks of a royal command performance; one can almost see behind each sequence a serious conference of diplomatic experts weeding out the tiniest suspicion of lese majeste in the script. Even the fustiest conservatives like Lord Salisbury and Joseph Chamberlain are built into more human shape with barely a hint at their pain-in-the-neck shortcomings. The French politicians and diplomats are treated less delicately; one feels they share in the normal functions of the human mind and body. The general effect, however, is toward pomposity, of over-exact chalk-lines to guide the feet of the actors, which occasionally degenerates into the ridiculous when knee-breeches and silk stockings turn the dignified rams into goats.

The picture's qualities manage to show through whenever these restrictions are raised. Edward's journeys to Paris, his tours of Paris night-life and the many intimate little meetings and conversations between him and key-people suggest very well the gradual thawing of the ice. By dramatizing such incidents as the Fashoda quarrel or a rude letter from the Kaiser, a sharpness is added to the defining of Anglo-French relations. Sometimes a real dignity entirely ousts the pompous notes and creates a feeling of impressive reality. Gaby Morlay, as Queen Victoria, is prominent in this respect. Victor Francen, as Edward, adds tremendously to the stature of the picture, combining charm and dignity in a manner shared by none of the other actors. The Parisian backgrounds of his trips abroad are as good as anything in the picture, reminiscent of many canvases by the better painters of the era.

What value the film has is for schools. Not only does it give a general, if surface, presentation of the period, but also the precise and unhurried French dialog is good teaching material, helped as it is by the almost literal translations of the sub-titles.

N. D.

Fifty Years of Films

(Continued from page 13)

past few years to compensate for standardization by making pictures bigger and louder

and longer will defeat itself in the end. They have realized that exciting technique derives from importance of purpose, and that purpose means something people, creators and audiences, believe in and will fight for. Slowly, steadily and with a persistent courage in the face of great opposition, purpose is returning to the film. 1939 saw *Confessions of A Nazi Spy* amaze audiences with a new way of film-making, inflame them with a subject that belongs in the world they know. 1940 will see the release of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Beyond an authentic film of that terrible reality, there is nowhere that the eye of the camera cannot go.

Book Review

(Continued from page 9)

ifying the merely curious it has sensible, unspectacular explanations for genuinely interested readers. Its authors are attached to Universal studios and draw freely on this company's background for their photographs and written material. Their chapters cover all the important stages in the making of a movie from story to editing, plus brief surveys of movie history, the modern studio and the method of film distribution. Their pages are brightened by an intimate attitude towards the reader's interests and a number of stories and anecdotes.

Movie Workers is one of Harper's Picture Fact books—a series that presents workers in various activities chiefly by showing photographs of their instruments and professional surroundings. It seems to be planned mainly for youths of High School age who are interested in the movies as a vocation. It reviews very briefly the early days of the movie camera, the studio personnel, the training required for movie work and the uses to which movies can be put in medicine, education, athletics, advertising, etc.

Both books are representative of a growing tendency to let pictures tell the story, while words clear up the doubtful points much as sub-titles or dialog do in the modern film.

The Year's Best

(Continued from page 18)

Pygmalion
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
Stanley and Livingstone
Wuthering Heights
Drums Along the Mohawk
The Wizard of Oz
Beau Geste
Dark Victory
Union Pacific

GIRLS (14-17 years)

Goodbye Mr. Chips
The Old Maid
Wuthering Heights
Pygmalion
Stanley and Livingstone
Dark Victory
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
Drums Along the Mohawk
Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex
The Wizard of Oz

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

(Continued from page 2)

vaudeville actor who inherits a ranch, a small niece and a lot of gun-toting trouble. The usual Western with a difference. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, THE—Charles Laughton, Maureen O'Hara, Sir Cedric Hardwicke. Based on the novel by Victor Hugo. Directed by William Dieterle. A remarkably effective adaptation of the famous novel, especially effective in its recreation of some of the salient aspects and issues of French life under Louis XI. Laughton makes a splendid hunchback and Maureen O'Hara a lovely foil to his ugliness and weirdness. Splendid entertainment for adults and not too gruesome for older children. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. RKO Radio.

- f INSPECTOR HORNLEIGH ON HOLIDAY—Gordon Harker, Alastair Sim. Based on the character "Inspector Hornleigh" by Hans W. Priwin. Directed by Walter Forde. An unusually entertaining adventure mystery, with the inspector and his Scottish assistant plunged into a murder hunt while on their vacation. English characters, refreshingly novel. 20th Century-Fox.

- f JUDGE HARDY AND SON—Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone. Original screen story by Carey Wilson. Directed by George B. Seitz. Mickey has money trouble and girl trouble (four of them), his mother nearly dies of pneumonia in a long, tearful interlude, and the picture is the prechiest of the series so far. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f LAMBETH WALK, THE—Lupino Lane, Alice Grey. Based on musical comedy "Me and My Girl" by Leslie Arthur Rose and Douglas Furber. Directed by Albert de Courville. An English musical show, with a slight plot about a cockney's inheriting a dukedom, and bridging the social gulf between high society and his friends from Lambeth Walk. Typical English comedy of its kind. (British production). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f LEGION OF THE LAWLESS—George O'Brien, Virginia Vale. Original screen story by Berne Glen. Directed by David Howard. A good old melodrama of the West. A young lawyer brings order to a lawless community. RKO Radio.

- f *LIGHT THAT FAILED, THE—Ronald Colman, Walter Huston, Ida Lupino. Based on the novel by Rudyard Kipling. Directed by William A. Wellman. An excellent portrayal of the novel. The story deals with a young painter who goes blind. The acting and direction are both very fine. Paramount.

- f NICK CARTER, MASTER DETECTIVE—Walter Pidgeon, Rita Johnson, Donald Meek. Original screen story by Bertram Millhauser. Directed by Jacques Tourneur. The famous old detective in a stream-lined mystery, up to his old cleverness with all modern improvements. Interesting minor characters and atmosphere. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f NIGHT OF NIGHTS, THE—Pat O'Brien, Olympe Bradna. Original screen story by Donald Ogden Stewart. Directed by Lewis Milestone. A story of an actor who, parted from his wife, lives a broken hearted existence until twenty years later his daughter, whom he has never seen, brings him love and happiness. Paramount.

- f PAROLE FIXER—William Henry, Virginia Dale. Based on "Persons in Hiding" by J. Edgar Hoover. Directed by Robert Florey. A story of paroles that are fixed so that the men can return to their lives of crime and share with the man who fixes the paroles. Paramount.

- fj TWO THOROUGHBREDS—Jimmy Lydon, Joan Brodel. Original screen story by Joseph A. Fields. Directed by Jack Hively. A simple and often touching story of an orphan boy and a horse. The boy is new and natural, and the horse excellent. RKO Radio.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- fj *AMERICAN ROYAL—Showing thoroughbred cattle and horses. Lovely slow motion pictures of horses jumping and in harness. An excellent picture for animal lovers and "be kind to animals" week. RKO Radio.
- f AMERICAN SADDLE HORSES—How the American saddle horse has developed out of the old-time mustang. An instructive short with slow motion studies of a horse's action and clear explanations of inter-breeding. Vitaphone.
- fj BIRTH OF THE MOVIES—A short survey of the movies from the very start up to the talkies. Some shots from old pictures. Alliance Films.
- f CHILE—A color cruise showing beautiful scenes of Chile. Recommended for schools and libraries. Paramount.
- fj FOOLS WHO MADE HISTORY NO. 2—How Charles Goodyear discovered the process of vulcanizing rubber. Columbia.
- f FORGOTTEN VICTORY—About Mark Carleton and his search for a wheat that would resist drought and disease. Well done and interesting. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f HISTORIC CITIES OF INDIA (Columbia Tours)—Mostly about Delhi, with a side visit to the Taj Mahal. Columbia.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 4—The "experts" in this filming of the famous radio act are John Kieran, F. P. A., Oscar Levant and Deems Taylor. It is amusing. RKO Radio.
- f JAI ALAI (Special Sport Thrills)—Interesting description of this famous Spanish-American game. Columbia.
- f JUDO EXPERTS—Grantland Rice Sportlight, showing the art of judo which is like ju jitsu. Paramount.
- fj KANGAROO COUNTRY, THE—An interesting reel about Australia. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj LAND OF ALASKA NELLIE, THE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—About Alaska and particularly a woman who runs a famous tavern there. Metro Goldwyn Mayer.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 4, THE (Series 6)—A splendid compilation of world events during the momentous year of 1939 and an interesting survey of the Associated Press. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 5, THE (Series 6)—Another splendid exposition of national maneuvers in a world at war. Deals with the Pacific situation, showing the British problems and concentrating on the plans of the U. S. for the re-fortification of Guam. Clear and concise as this series always is. RKO Radio.
- f MIRACLES AT LOURDES (MGM Miniatures)—The story of a paralyzed woman who found a sudden cure, but whether from the shrine or from her own emotions in a crisis is not clear. Metro Goldwyn Mayer.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 2—Showing the new way of preserving foods and building houses; picking pineapples; testing safety devices. Recommended for schools and libraries. Paramount.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 3—Mapping remote places by aeroplanes; bathroom gadgets; crazy scientist; classifying different kinds of blood for transfusion. Paramount.
- fj ROMANCE OF THE POTATO (Pete Smith Specialty)—An interesting and humorous history of how the potato was found and developed as food. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 2—A trip to see some of the famous animals of Hollywood—all "stars" of many films. Very engaging and well made. Columbia.
- f *SKY FIGHTERS—A particularly fine and vivid picture of how the American army air corps are trained. 20th Century-Fox.
- f TOUCHDOWN REVIEW—Famous touchdowns in 1939, making good use of the slow motion and the stop camera. Bill Slater as commentator. Paramount.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 2—Odd occupations such as: a traveling dentist; painting with colored sand instead of paint, a farm in the heart of London; etc. Paramount.

- f WASHINGTON PARADE NO. 1—An interesting tour through the Smithsonian Institute, accompanied by a florid commentator. Col.

MUSICALS, CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- j ANDY PANDA GOES FISHING—Color cartoon. What happens to a little panda when he goes fishing. Universal.
- fj FIRST ROBIN, THE (Terry-toon Cartoon)—A merry cartoon about a robin family and a cat. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GREAT KENNEDY, THE—Edgar Kennedy has some funny mishaps as an amateur magician. RKO Radio.
- f HERE'S HAL (Headliner)—A musical number with Hal Kemp's orchestra. Some of the old time tunes pepped up. Paramount.
- fj ICE POND, THE (Terrytoon Cartoon)—Clever and amusing, with some rabbits, a pig and a fox on skates. 20th Century-Fox.
- f THAT INFERIOR FEELING—One of Robert Benchley's funny comedies. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW CONFERENCE

February 1st - 3rd

New York City, Hotel Pennsylvania

The Conference program is built around the subject "Fifty Years of Films." Some of the subjects to be discussed by informed speakers are: "Story Content of Early Films," "Development of Social Trends in the Motion Pictures," "Educational Trends in the Motion Picture," "The Newsreel and the War in Europe."

There will be several film showings, and discussions of organized community and youth motion picture activities. On Saturday, February 3rd, will be held the twenty-fifth Annual Luncheon.

There is no fee for Conference sessions. Luncheon is \$2.00.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

70 Fifth Avenue,
New York City

I plan to attend Conference (Send stamped envelope for tickets in advance or secure at the door).

I wish Luncheon tickets (\$2.00 each. Reservations in order of check received)

Name

Address

Affiliation

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnished an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions

\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone, available at a special rate of \$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Catalog (annual).....25c

Special Film Lists.....10c ea.

Such as Selected Films for Children's Showings, Selected Book-Films, Educational Films, etc.

National Board of Review—Its Background, Growth and Present Status.....free

National Board of Review—How It Works.....free

A Plan and a Program for Community Motion Picture Councils.....10c

5000

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 2



February, 1940



The Joad family's truck, in "The Grapes of Wrath" (see page 16)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f ***ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 20.

fj **BLUEBIRD, THE**—Shirley Temple. Based on the play by Maurice Maeterlinck. Directed by Walter Lang. A simple story of two children who go to look for the blue bird of happiness, only to find after a night of searching that the blue bird was right in their home. Shirley Temple as Mytyl is a new and more subdued Shirley but as charming. A color production. 20th Century-Fox.

f **BROADWAY MELODY OF 1940**—Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell, George Murphy. Original screen story by Jack McGowan & Dore Schary. Directed by Norman Taurog. Astaire and Murphy, dancing partners, pals and rivals, get their identities mixed on the way to fame and love. Some of Astaire's best dancing, spectacular and beautiful production numbers and a mildly pleasant love story. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f **BROTHER RAT AND A BABY**—Wayne Morris, Eddie Albert, Priscilla Lane, Jane Bryan. Original screen story by John Monks, Jr. and Fred F. Finkelhoffe. Directed by Ray Enright. A rapid-fire comedy farce, with a rush of complications concerned with getting Bing Edwards a coaching job. The baby—Peter B. Good—is the innocent center of much of the trouble, which is all swift and amusing. Warner Bros.

m **CASTLE ON THE HUDSON**—John Garfield, Ann Sheridan, Pat O'Brien. Based on book by Warden Lewis E. Lawes. Directed by Anatole Litvak. A prison story, well acted and directed and with an excellent cast.

How an arrogant gangster makes good in prison and keeps his word to the warden even though it meant the chair. Warner Bros.

f **CHARLIE CHAN IN PANAMA**—Sidney Toler, Jean Rogers, Mary Nash. Original screen story by John Larkin & Lester Ziffren. Directed by Norman Foster. Charlie Chan prevents the blowing up of the fleet in the Panama Canal. The identity of the foreign agent is cleverly hidden till the end. 20th Century-Fox.

f **CHASING TROUBLE**—Frankie Darro, Marjorie Reynolds. Original screen story by Mary McCarty. Directed by Howard Bretherton. "Cupid" O'Brien, a florist's delivery boy, tries his hand at matchmaking and gets involved with a gang of crooks. Monogram.

f **CONGO MAISIE**—Ann Sothorn, John Carroll. Based on novel "Congo Landing" by Wilson Collison. Directed by H. C. Potter. On an African rubber plantation, among turbulent natives, Maisie, honest and tough-minded, helps a young doctor find himself and a young married couple adjust their troubles. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f ***FIGHTING 69th, THE**—James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, George Brent. Original screen story by Norman Reilly Raine, Fred Niblo, Jr. and Dean Franklin. Directed by William Keighley. This stirring film re-creates Father Duffy and the exploits of the famed 69th New York Regiment in the World War, centering about a tough lad from Brooklyn who is a disgrace to the regiment till his heroic death. Emphatically but not narrowly Catholic in atmosphere, the film eloquently pleads for tolerance and true patriotism. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Warner Bros.

m ***GRAPES OF WRATH, THE**—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 16.

m **GREEN HELL**—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Joan Bennett. Original screen story by Francis Marion. Directed by James Whale. A story of treasure hunting in the jungles. Seven men who go adventuring in the wilds of the jungle find not only treasure but danger and thrills. The picture was too long and it would have been much more interesting without the love element. Universal.

m **HE MARRIED HIS WIFE**—Joel McCrea, Nancy Kelly, Roland Young, Mary Boland. Original screen story by Erna Lazarus and Scott Darling. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. A young couple, divorced on account of his passion for horse-racing, are brought together again in a light, hair-brained farce comedy. 20th Century-Fox.

(Continued on page 22)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Vol. XV, Number 2.

February 1940

20c a copy, \$2.00 a year

Wilton A. Barrett 1885-1940

WILTON AGNEW BARRETT, who has been Executive Secretary of the National Board of Review for the last seventeen years, died on February 18th.

Barrett, a young poet just out of the University of Pennsylvania, came to New York in the early days of the Board, in 1909, and his interest and enthusiasm was caught by the possibilities he sensed in the motion picture. Those were turbulent and crucial times for the movies, beset by undiscerning antagonism from without and violent competitive struggle within. Movies then were barely emerging from the nickelodeon stage, primitive entertainment that was cheap in all the other ways besides its price of admission. Barrett saw the essence of what it could become, a universal popular art, a new means of communication more potent than anything since the invention of printing, and a powerful educative force. That was what aroused his sympathy for the newly created National Board,

founded by the People's Institute to work with the picture producers with its guidance and advice, to help intelligent people to understand and appreciate the still infantile movie. He became a member of the Board's staff, and has worked with it ever since,

finally as the main director of its efforts, holding together with remarkable energy a most varied association of committees and individuals working voluntarily for the advancement of the motion picture.

Many of the theories and practices now followed by different audience groups and critical groups in their relation to the motion picture were first instituted by the National Board, and Barrett's intelligent foresight largely developed those he did not actually himself create. The always increasing influence of the large re-



Wilton A. Barrett

viewing committees as representatives of the intelligent, selective public; the organizing of the Young Reviewers groups, which are not only an active outlet for the interest of boys and girls in the movies but an important

check on what young people think about the movies when they do their own thinking; the planning of the Annual Conferences in which people from far and near can discuss their interests and problems in connection with the motion picture and its relation to the home, the school and the community; the annual citation of outstanding films and the people who made them; the encouragement of the study in schools and colleges of the motion picture as an artistic and social force—in all of these things Barrett, working through the National Board, has been a pioneer.

Closest to his own interest has been the work of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, because he was primarily an artist and a poet. He had watched the movies grow from the crudest beginnings, and its history fascinated him. He had worked with Terry Ramsaye in compiling an invaluable screen record of the movies' development. He saw the motion picture most of all as an art, slowly shaping itself and struggling toward maturity, and for that reason he put great importance on the Committee whose work was the recognition and encouragement of films that needed special attention brought to them because they were breaking new ground and were often outside the realm of popular entertainment and ap-

preciation. He was fascinated by technical improvements wherever they came from, and his profound belief that the screen should be as free and unhampered as any other form of artistic expression made him welcome any extension that the human mind and spirit could attain in its manifestation on the screen. He encouraged the appreciation of the best in foreign films because of what was intrinsic in them and because of what American producers could learn about their art from them. He was immensely proud of American achievement in motion pictures, but he saw the motion picture as a universal force that could eventually accomplish more than any other one thing in making people all over the world understand one another, because it spoke with a universal voice that was more than mere language.

In announcing the death of its Executive Secretary, Wilton A. Barrett, the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Inc., desires to put on record its appreciation of a long career of devoted disinterested service, marked by high qualities of intellect and character, as well as the deep sense of loss sustained by its officers and members.

A. A. BRILL, *President*

J. K. PAULDING, *Secretary*

The National Board 1940 Conference

PERHAPS the prevailing impression remaining from this year's Conference is a sense of surprise at the amount of ground it covered—the many years of the life of the movies and the many fields into which they have penetrated. This was the aim of the Conference; to discuss "Fifty Years of Films" in such a way that the audience would learn something of the important years in the life of the movies and something more about the directions in which the movie has moved and how and why it has changed.

Three speakers, Mr. Francis Doublier, Mr. Richard Griffith and Mr. Albert Howson, chose to discuss periods in the life of the movies that were filled with vital developments. Mr. Doublier, a Frenchman from

Lyons, drew on his experiences of forty-five years ago, when he was cameraman to the Lumiere brothers and was given the continent of Asia as his newsreel assignment. Mr. Howson drew on his experiences as Warner Bros. director of the first sound films to describe that great technical moment in film history when the movies changed from silence to sound. Mr. Griffith took that same moment from a different angle, showing how the art of the silent film differed from that of its successor in sound.

"Personalities" in film history fell to Miss Elissa Landi and Mr. Norbert Lusk, she describing the conditions under which the actress works, and he the influence of prominent men and women of the screen in the silent days.

The remaining addresses can perhaps be described as of the more social and educational variety. Mr. Robert Gessner traced the type of story and narrative used in certain periods of the film; Mr. W. W. Whittinghill discussed both past and present trends in the use of educational motion pictures. Mr. Arthur Mayer pressed for the support by groups and individuals of films which discussed topical and social problems, while Mr. Hans Burger put in a warning against the belief that the camera cannot lie, and asked

of Modern Art, and were introduced by Miss Iris Barry, Curator of the Film Library, following a tour of the Museum. A screening was arranged by Twentieth Century-Fox in their Little Theater of *The Grapes of Wrath*, which the delegates viewed in company with the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Following the screening the delegates unanimously and enthusiastically voted that the Conference and the Committee express its commendation to the producers of this film. The following telegram was sent to Mr.



Screen guests at the Board's Annual Luncheon (see page 6)

for discretion in the estimation of documentary films.

The Conference was most fortunate in its choice of film showings. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* was presented in conjunction with the Motion Picture Course in the School of Education at New York University by special courtesy of RKO Radio Pictures, Inc. Various noteworthy films, ranging from Melies' *Trip to the Moon* to *Three Little Pigs* (in French!) filled an evening at the Museum

Darryl Zanuck, Vice-president in charge of production of Twentieth Century-Fox:

"That Twentieth Century-Fox be especially congratulated and commended for their production of *The Grapes of Wrath*. It is a great film in all the ways that a film can be great—in its conception, writing, direction, acting, photography—all elements unified in a masterly whole. Most of all is the producer to be praised for his courage in making a film so out of the ordinary, and for the art-

istic skill and integrity which so forcefully and beautifully brings an American subject of so much social importance to the screen. The National Board of Review will do everything in its power to make the public aware of so outstanding a film, and to urge box-office support of it."

One session was devoted to community motion picture activities with many delegates taking part in a discussion under the chairmanship of Mrs. Marguerite Schwarzman of the Executive Committee. Another session demonstrated to the delegates the Board's junior activity as carried on by the 4-Star Clubs. The talks delivered by the juniors will appear in the 4-Star Final.

The concluding event of the Conference, the twenty-fifth annual luncheon was held in the Banquet Room of the Hotel Pennsylvania, and was attended by more than three hundred people. Addresses were made by Dr. A. A. Brill, Chairman of the National Board; Mrs. Alonzo Klaw, Chairman of the Hostess Committee and Mr. Edward G. Robinson, who expressed his own satisfaction and that of Warner Bros. in the selection of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* as the best

picture of 1939 by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the Board.

The following stars and screen personalities attended the Luncheon: Sara Allgood, John Beal, Roman Bohnen, Harry Carey, Donald Cook, Jane Darwell, Betty Field, Bertita Harding, Van Heflin, Mary Howard, Bert Lytell, Burgess Meredith, Ona Munson, Edmund O'Brien, Mr. and Mrs. Edward G. Robinson, Alison Skipworth, Robert Stack, Ezra Stone.

The various conference and luncheon addresses will be published in this Magazine, starting with the current issue. It is our hope that they may serve as interesting and useful study material. The editors would welcome comment from readers for publication in the correspondence columns.

The thanks of the National Board are due to the many delegates and friends of its affiliated groups and councils who attended the conference and luncheon, who sent material for the exhibit on community activities and expressed their interest by serving on the Conference Committee, which was representative of 54 cities.

Address at the Twenty-fifth Annual Luncheon by Dr. A. A. Brill, Chairman of the National Board

ON welcoming you to this 25th annual luncheon, I wish to express to you the gratitude of the Committee and its staff, for your interest in our work and for your whole-hearted cooperation with our efforts to keep the motion picture free from subversive influences. I cannot help thinking of my predecessor, Dr. Kirchwey, whom you are missing here today. I am sure that I am voicing your feelings when I say that we have all deeply appreciated his active, and I might say, wise cooperation, which he has so generously given us since 1926, and we hope that he may enjoy good health and contentment as Chairman Emeritus.

This 25th annual luncheon must be distinguished from all the others by the fact that it marks a half a century of the motion-picture art. In contradistinction to what is known as the legitimate stage, which has existed for

many centuries or perhaps longer, the motion picture form of dramatic, musical and vaudeville entertainment has lived just 50 years.

I am one of those fortunate beings who has watched the development of the motion-picture throughout all these years. I saw the first films by dropping a penny in a slot-machine, and thereafter watched their development from the most primitive films to their present state of auditory and colorful perfection. Now and then, I try to separate the movies from all the other cultural and mechanical discoveries which have taken place during these two generations, and whenever I succeed I am impressed by the prodigious development of this art as such, and its sundry implications. My chief interest in life, as most of you know, is normal and abnormal behavior. I am a psychiatrist,

so that from the very beginning of the movies I have observed their effects on the individual and society. I think I was the first psychiatrist who spoke and wrote on the influence of the motion picture on the mind. The National Board, I believe, has been actively interested in motion pictures for about thirty or thirty-five years. The Board was organized when the first so-called "photoplays" were produced. John Collier of the Peoples' Institute, who became the Board's first Secretary, was the first one to interest me in the photoplays. Everett Dean Martin, later, as Chairman of the Board, repeatedly invited me to see some movies, especially those which treated of sexual and mental problems, and give my opinion to the National Board. I then became a member of the organization and have been actively interested in its workings ever since. For I soon came to realize that these serious and social-minded men and women who composed this organization had the right vision concerning the social functions of this art. I was naturally also interested in the psychological implications of the movies. From their very first appearance I was repeatedly consulted by mothers and educators about the effects of motion pictures on the child and the adult. My views on the influence of the motion picture are well known, but I feel, however, that a few of them will bear repetition.

Of the inventions that have come into existence during the last 50 years the motion picture is in my opinion by far the most important. It is the best entertainer, educator and emotional stabilizer. By virtue of its wide and easy dissemination it conveys education and emotional outlets to millions of people the world over. No other medium of expression can equal it in this respect; it truly annihilates time and space. All of you, I know, readily follow me when I speak of the movies as a medium of entertainment and education, but some of you may not understand what I mean when I call them an *emotional stabilizer*, by which I mean that the motion picture also acts as an emotional purge for the audience.

As a pure entertainer, it often acts as a medium of escape, but not all movies offer pure amusement. *The Grapes of Wrath* and

Of Mice and Men and many others certainly do not end with the hero and heroine falling into each other's arms and living happily ever after. Last month, I received a questionnaire which was based on the success which Miss Bette Davis has achieved in the past year as Judith Traherne in *Dark Victory*, as the Empress Carlotta in *Juarez*, as Charlotte in *The Old Maid*, and as Elizabeth in *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*. In none of these was there a happy ending; on the contrary, in one she is a dying young woman, in another she goes insane, etc. The questionnaire, however, was based entirely on the assumption that the movies represent a medium of escape, and as all the pictures mentioned above in which Miss Davis distinguished herself were not only artistic, but also box-office successes, it was a question whether we were not witnessing a change in public taste and emotional response as regards motion pictures. My answer was that the assumption of the movie as an escape medium was only partially true. The outlet that one obtains from the movies is due to the *empathy* (feeling or reading oneself into a person or situation), or identification, that the person in the audience makes with the character in the play. But an *outlet*, which is a path for pent-up emotions, is not necessarily pleasant. The escape plays rarely represent reality as it is, for reality is not always beautiful and does not always end pleasantly. Moreover, there are many people who are more or less dominated by tragic motifs and many to whom this is indispensable. Many of the ancient Greek plays are constructed entirely on this motif. The plays of Sophocles and others are tragedies of fate in which the individual is made to bow to the will of the gods. The success achieved by Miss Davis was due entirely to her ability to depict such parts so skilfully—which brings us to the functions of the players.

You may not know that the actors and actresses, the so-called "stars" of whom we have seen a number today, are really scapegoats for our emotions. Not only do they live through for us our most ideal phantasies, but also forbidden desires, which we, as ordinary beings, hardly dare contemplate. That is why I feel that they are worth everything that we give them—all the money, all the

adulation. They take, as it were, our sins on themselves. They commit adultery for us, they die for us, they do everything that we cannot possibly do. Through identification with them they disburden us of our sins, of our drab and monotonous reality, so that we can live better than we would otherwise.

Mr. Carey* spoke to you about prize fights. I, too, happen to be a fight fan. I could not go to last night's fight because I had to prepare this paper. Now, even there the chief actors, the two fighters, disburden us of a lot of aggression of which we could not otherwise rid ourselves. Civilized beings dominated by the morality of the Golden Rule must control their aggression. Quite often we would like to kill some of our friends or enemies, but the best we can do is curse, which is a very poor substitute. But at a prize fight, when we see someone knocked cold, we empathize ourselves into the aggressive fighter who does the 'knocking out' and we go home satisfied, no matter how much it costs.

There is one more subject that I wish to touch upon. I am referring to the constant and numerous gibes that some of our intelligentsia hurl at the producers and at the industry in general. You often read and hear that Hollywood gives us only viciousness and trash, slopdoodle, moronic stuff, etc., etc. Braving the wrath of even some of my friends who have repeatedly uttered that kind of stuff, I beg to disagree with them. I am convinced that there are very few movies that come from Hollywood which do not serve a more beneficial than a vicious purpose. Considering the magnitude of the in-

dustry and the difficulties of selecting and dealing with supermen and superwomen, who are indispensable for the success of the movie, I feel that the industry, as such, has done wonders, and has contributed equally as much as the literateurs and the stars that they discover or make. It must not be forgotten that the improvement in the motion picture is due as much to the improvement of the mechanical techniques as to the animate beings who participate in their productions. Yet, despite the enormous mechanical improvements in sound and color, I feel that much more will have to be done before the motion-picture will be able to carry to the audience that emotional feeling which we call *rapport*, which we readily feel on meeting a person face to face, which we experienced today on seeing Mr. Carey and the other luminaries, but which we do not yet get from the screen. In other words, what we get now is an empathy of situation rather than the deeper feelings which one obtains from the so-called legitimate stage. The producers will in time surely remedy this.

The National Board of Review has always stood for the freedom of the screen; its members and staff have worked very hard that the motion picture might be what the people want it to be. In our close contact with the motion picture industry for over thirty years, we can say that as a rule, the producers have been very understanding and cooperative. We hope that they have the same feeling about us. Instead of joking and reviling we have every reason to be proud of what the producers have done. It is through their wisdom and efforts that the quality of motion pictures has been constantly improving, and we are certain that they will go on advancing as a great and beneficial force for mankind.

*Mr. Harry Carey, who played the Vice-presidential role in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," was also a speaker at the Luncheon.

The National Board and the Schools Committee

An address at the Annual Luncheon by Mrs. Alonzo Klaw, a member of the National Council of the Board, who was Chairman of the Conference Hostess Committee. She is the active Chairman of the Schools Motion Picture Committee of New York City.

THIS is the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the National Board of Review's first Annual Luncheon. As in a marriage, the 25th is a very special anniversary.

The years of adjustment are over, relationships are established, the children are grown up and on their own, we enjoy them but no longer have full responsibility for them, maturity is arrived at but there is still youth enough and enthusiasm for new ways, time to take on new activities.

This is certainly true of the National

Board of Review. All over the country, we—its off-spring, the Better Films Councils—are going concerns. Each of us, in our own fashion, is solving the special problems of better pictures, but turning back constantly to the Board for advice, to share experience and to find help where concerted action is needed.

This is the 25th anniversary of the whole better films movement. I think I am right in saying that the National Board is the oldest and certainly the most influential of all such organizations.

Over the course of 25 years, through its Film Councils, its Reviewing Committees, its 4-Star Clubs and Junior reviewing groups, the National Board has raised its own audience of discrimination. Is it not significant that year after year the critics' and the public's lists of the year's ten best pictures are largely composed of those already rated exceptional by the National Board?

All of us are interested in the better motion pictures movement, otherwise we wouldn't be here. Few of us would deny that in these past twenty-five years pictures have developed from the lowest form of amusement to the greatest of living arts. It's a far cry from some of those early films we were privileged to see at the Museum of Modern Art Film Library during the Conference to such pictures as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Ninotchka*, *Harvest* and the magnificent *Grapes of Wrath*.

The National Board has helped us, all over the country, to make our wishes articulate. It is to the industry that we owe the high type of entertainment we are now getting, but isn't it the National Board that has in great part created the audience that makes the showing of these pictures profitable? But here am I, a comparative newcomer to the National Board trying to tell you how well it serves us when you all know so much more about it than I do.

I would like to say a few words about the Schools Motion Picture Committee which works closely with the National Board. We differ from most Better Films Councils since we concern ourselves not with feature pictures alone but with whole programs and only with these in their relation to children,

whom we quite arbitrarily define as the 10 to 14's. Our Committee reviews not only features but shorts, newsreels, and even the trailers. This means that when you see one of our week-end lists in the N. Y. Times, Herald-Tribune, Evening Post or in Cue, every part of each program has been covered and approved. Figure out for yourselves the difficulties involved. Theoretically there are over 300 theatres in greater Manhattan which are cooperating with us, actually it is a good week when we are able to list one-tenth of these.

That isn't because there aren't enough good pictures for us to choose from. It is really because there are too many pictures. It is because of that strange policy of the industry here in New York to cater at one time, and at one showing, to all tastes. We are envious of you, in other cities, who tell us that your local theatres will substitute a desirable feature for an unapproved one at your request. We have no such good fortune. Week after week our lists of approved and disapproved pictures go to the two major booking offices to little avail. We hope that the combination of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Five Little Peppers* resulted from our efforts. Visualize what it means to find on one program two features and at least four trailers suitable for our children. This week there are to be shown these "unheavenly twins," as Frank Nugent of the N. Y. Times calls them: Sonja Henie in *Everything Happens at Night*, with *The Return of Dr. X*; *Cisco Kid and the Lady with One Hour to Live*; *At the Circus* with *Barricade*. And yet our requirements are not exacting. We have promised, in our lists, good entertainment for children, and with few exceptions, because of subject matter, what is amusing to adults is amusing to children. We find our young people from the affiliated schools often more discriminating in their choice of entertainment than their parents. They are the new audience which the National Board is helping into existence. Youngsters know what they want and are willing to shop around to get it. Nor do they feel, as the majority does, that every picture with a child star necessarily furnishes good entertainment for them.

Our reviewers, young and adult, all use

the same set of flexible standards worked out by members of the Executive Committee, teachers from affiliated schools and psychiatrists. We do not believe in any form of censorship. We want the truth for our children, the right values. They must live in this strange world that we are handing on to them. It is their right to know it as it is. That is why we list *Grapes of Wrath*, perhaps the finest picture yet to come out of Hollywood, and an adult picture if ever there was one.

Charlie Chaplin in his introduction to Gilbert Seldes' "The Movies Come from America" expresses better than I can the attitude of the Schools Motion Picture Committee in choosing pictures for our children. He says: "If the element of aesthetic criticism were considered in censoring a film it might result in a more adequate method of judging what is morally fit for the public. For many films would be banned in their entirety because of their lack of good taste, their false standards of life and their vulgar treatment."

We are as much concerned with taste, with the wealth of values, as we are with content. An entirely innocuous picture, even if properly presented, does not come up to our requirements. A picture has to be more than morally clean for us to recommend it.

Our aim is still, as always, pictures made for children shown in theatres set aside at

certain hours for children and their accompanying families.

Each year there are more and better pictures for us to choose from. Were it not for double billing we would, even now, be able to recommend week-end programs in at least one theatre in every neighborhood of Greater Manhattan.

And it isn't the industry's fault that we can't. The fault is ours, the parents. I am reliably informed that there are over a million two thousand children in Greater Manhattan forming a potential movie audience. I am not mathematician enough to figure out how many families they represent. But if even a quarter of these parents made themselves articulate, used their great power at the box-office to show the industry what we as parents want, we'd get it, and get it soon.

Let us stand behind the exhibitor who is willing to cooperate, crowd his theatre when he shows a program suitable for our youngsters, instead of sending them around the corner—regardless of what is playing there—because it is so easy. Let us stop blaming the industry for what our children see at the movies. We get exactly what we deserve unless we ask for something better. We, the parents, must lift our voices, make ourselves heard, all of us, all the Motion Picture Councils throughout the country. Then we'll get what we are asking for.

Travels of a Cameraman in the 90s

By FRANCIS DOUBLIER

Mr. Doublier was cameraman for the Lumiere brothers from 1894 to 1902 and told of his experiences as such at the Board's Conference.

AS one of the pioneers in the motion picture industry, I am pleased and honored to have an opportunity to talk to you today. I am a little too young, however, to date my introduction to the movie quite as far back as the fifty years you are celebrating. In France, where I began my career with Monsieur Louis Lumiere at Lyons in 1894, we do not date the beginning of the film industry from the invention

of Mr. Edison's kinetoscope peepbox—marvelous as it was—but from the date when the movie first was shown on the screen with the Cinematographe, and this was in 1895.

Most of my family had been employed by the Lumiere brothers in their great photographic factory at Monplaisir in Lyons, France, and I went to work there in 1894. As a boy I was fortunate in working in the laboratory with Moisson, the chief mechanic of the Lumiere plant, who built the first Cinematographe, and, most importantly, with the great Louis Lumiere himself, under whose

immediate direction and supervision we all worked at that time. I am very proud to have been one of the very few to whom he trusted the secret of his great invention in that early time.

You all know about the first motion picture which Monsieur Louis Lumiere photographed with his newly constructed Cinematographe? Probably most of you have seen it. It is called, *The Workers Coming Out of the Factory at Lyons, Monplaisir*. Well, I was in that picture—one of the workers. If you see the picture again—as I am sure you will sometime—you will see me in it, toward the end of the film, riding a bicycle and wearing a straw hat. You can't miss me, although you probably won't recognize me. I have put on considerable weight since then! This picture, as you know, was photographed by Monsier Louis Lumiere in September, 1894, but was not shown publicly until March 22, 1895, when M. Lumiere showed it to the Societe d'Encouragement a l'Industrie Nationale in Paris. After that he exhibited the Cinematographe before several other scientific societies in France and Belgium in that year, all of them private exhibitions, however.

The official and historic date for the first commercial showing of the Cinematographe movies on the screen is December 28, 1895, at the Grand Cafe, Paris, and it is this date that can be said properly to mark the beginnings of the great industry which we see today, with its thousands of great and elaborate theatres, and thousands and thousands of screens, both professional and amateur, in theatres, schools and colleges, homes and meeting halls.

It was not only my good fortune to be an unconscious actor in that first film photographed by Louis Lumiere for the screen, as I have told you, but also to have developed and handled it in the laboratory afterwards under Monsier Lumiere's supervision. He told me each step to take in the process. Later, I was also present, assisting Moisson, who was the projectionist, and his assistant, Ducon, who attended to the arc light, at the historic showing of the Cinematographe at the Grand Cafe. I rewound the little sixty foot reels and did any other odds and ends that they told me to do. I remember I was

quite excited at the time although perhaps I didn't quite realize what an important event was taking place in motion picture history.

As you know, neither Louis nor Auguste Lumiere wished to become motion picture producers. They were in the business of manufacturing photographic supplies. So they didn't set out to take pictures themselves after the successful showing of the Cinematographe at the Grand Cafe, where the pictures ran for months after the opening on December 28, 1895. Instead, they leased contracts to concessionaires, to use the Cinematographe, supplying them with camera raw stock and finished pictures. In Paris Monsieur Clement Maurice, an old friend of the Lumieres' father, had the concession. In London, Monsieur Trewey had it. In America, Monsieur Mesguiche introduced the Cinematographe at the Union Square Theatre a few weeks after Mr. Edison had shown his films on Arnat's Vitascope, April 23rd, 1896, at Koster and Bial's Music Hall on Thirty-fourth Street. But there were also innumerable other concessionaires, who traveled from country to country, and with each of them was a Lumiere man doing the photographing and projecting, checking the receipts of the showings, and seeing that Lumiere's share was duly sent back to him.

You must remember that the Lumiere Cinematographe was not only a camera and projector, it was also a printer. It was, in fact, a complete motion picture factory, within the compass of one small box, about the size of an ordinary hatbox. This box, however, with its simple but wonderful mechanism was then a great secret. The most important duty of the Lumiere man who worked with each concessionaire was to protect and guard this secret against all the world. Waking or sleeping the Cinematographe was never supposed to be out of his possession or sight. I will tell you some interesting things about this later, as I was the first Lumiere man to be sent out after the Paris showing. I was sent to Brussels and then to Amsterdam. Before I left Paris Louis Lumiere said to me: "Remember, Francisque, no one must ever see the inside of the Cinematographe. You must keep it with you at all times and guard its secret as carefully as you would guard a queen." I

never forgot his instructions, and when one night in Amsterdam two men in a dark street tried to steal my Cinematographe, I knew that others were trying to learn its secrets. I beat them off with the Cinematographe itself. It weighed only about eight pounds and made a formidable weapon. But I never walked alone with it on dark streets after that experience. My hotel was far from the showroom, and late at night in the lonely streets there was always danger to me and to the Cinematographe that never left my side. Later an effort was made to bribe me to show its inner mechanism, but I needn't say that the effort was unsuccessful.

After that experience in Amsterdam I got a room near the exhibition, and always had some one accompany me home. From Amsterdam I was sent to Berlin and other places in Germany and Denmark. Then in May, 1896, I was sent for to join Moisson in Moscow to photograph the coronation of the Czar Nicholas II. I had many interesting experiences there, if I only had time to tell you about them, besides photographing the brilliant coronation ceremonies. One photograph we made of a Grand Duke dancing with the famous danseuse, La Belle Otero, nearly got us into serious trouble, although we made it by special invitation. Afterward it suddenly occurred to some official that to show a Grand Duke dancing with a lady whose only claim to rank was her beauty and talent as a dancer might be too shocking for the Russian public. It might cheapen the Grand Duke's dignity. So we were all arrested and the negative destroyed, although I think some one paid the concessionaire for it afterwards.

But the really important event at which I was present was the terrible panic which occurred two days after the coronation in the Kodinsky Plain, where hundreds of thousands of people from all over Russia were gathered to do honor to their newly crowned Czar. With Moisson I had obtained a position the day before, on a small building overlooking the great plain, from which to photograph the scene. The crowd was so dense I could hardly get through it and when the panic started I was still a short distance away from our post. I was tall and young and some one lifted me up, happily for me, and I ac-

tually walked on the heads and shoulders of the crowd to get back to my camera stand, where I was hauled up with difficulty. The excitement was intense; the cries and shrieks and exclamations of the injured and dying being terrible to listen to. I can hear them still. I believe that more than five thousand people were crushed or trampled to death in that dreadful catastrophe and countless others injured. But I still have two of the souvenirs for which I unwittingly risked my life on that day. A beautiful enameled souvenir cup and a banner, commemorative of the coronation, which had been given away by the government to the people, and to obtain which, I think, was partly the cause of the panic, so eager was the great crowd to get one of them.

After this I spent nearly three years in Russia, covering the Balkans, Finland, Sweden and Norway. We would photograph crowds in the morning, telling them to come to see their pictures on the screen in the evening, but as we only took sixty feet of film, as it was then so expensive, perhaps not all of them got photographed, although I always cranked the camera for a couple of hours. Then the negative had to be developed and printed to be ready for the screening in the evening and, with the limited facilities available, it is needless to say that as cameraman, laboratory man and projectionist, I had rather a full day.

In 1899 I was sent to India, China, Persia and Japan. I wish I could tell you some of the many interesting experiences I had in these countries. In Nizhni Novgorod, for instance, the men didn't like to have us photograph them or their women. They had some superstition or other about it, and one night they burned down the building where we showed the pictures. But I had my Cinematographe camera with me in my room so that it was unharmed. In Elisabethgrad City we ran into a pogrom, or uprising of the peasants of some sort, and there was shooting and rioting on the streets. We got some pictures of it, but our concessionaire took fright, and made us leave the city that night. It was all very exciting.

I recall one incident that I think will interest you. No doubt you will all remember hearing of the Dreyfus case, which at that

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Dominant Personalities of the Early Films

By NORBERT LUSK

Mr. Lusk, a scenario writer of the silent film days and long a film critic, gave the following talk at the Conference.

FIRST of all, I should like to pay a tribute to those personalities—dominant and otherwise—in early films who have suffered the fate of pioneers and path-finders and early settlers. Time and the progress of motion pictures have closed in upon their memory—erased it from the minds of the majority. Today only the student or the writer bent on research comes upon names that once stood for the same values that cause players we know to be admired and talked about, widely publicized and richly rewarded.

These early personalities were content with very much less. They had to be. Admired, yes, by a limited public and discussed, too, by those of their audience who were capable of discussing anything. That was all. Of publicity and riches they had none. The newspaper columnist had not fixed his all-seeing eye upon the keyhole. Newspapers, indeed, did not recognize the existence of pictures or their personalities except to publish someone's concept of them as a menace to young morals. Or to report a skirmish in the battle of their tooth-and-claw owners to crowd each other out. There was not even a fan magazine for an actor to open for consolation. The first of these gushers of information was not in existence.

Monetary appeasement for this anonymous but busy creative work was slight though steady for the fortunate. The first salary of Mary Pickford, Mabel Normand, Blanche Sweet, Lillian and Dorothy Gish was five dollars a day before they achieved a weekly rate of a little less. However, this is not to be a tabulation of salaries or a chronicle of privations. As a matter of fact five dollars went far in the first decade of the century. Most of those who received it were jubilantly carefree for the first time. They had not earned as much on the stage, or posing for artists, or by any of the other precarious

means of making a living open to untrained youth. Grandest of all, this new movies acting offered steady work and was great fun.

Perhaps these early players who were making history and did not know it, do not deserve our tribute, because they were having such a good time. Perhaps they did not realize that either. Youth is slow to grant kindness to the gods and acting talent of any age is seldom allied to the gift of perspective.

On this fiftieth anniversary of motion pictures it is my privilege to offer a wreath of immortelles to the memory of those who worked in early films. Their youthful ardor, their fortitude in the face of hardship, their cleverness in counterfeiting costumes and finery they could not buy and, most of all, their acting entitles each and every one to our appreciation and thanks.

They set a standard of acting from the first that placed American films ahead of all others—made them preferred by audiences all over the world. Acting on the screen has, of course, undergone a vast change. The work of some of these revered pioneers is good for a guffaw when it is seen nowadays. But we must remember it had the vigor of American attack. Those responsible for it were fresh—enthusiastic. If they lacked the sophistication and finesse of the French and the Italians, they were developing a new technique while the continentals were either over-doing stage histrionics or employing the art of seventeenth century pantomime in place of something new.

Foremost of early film personalities was Mary Pickford. D. W. Griffith was the first to shape the art of story-telling in pictures. No bow in the direction of early days would be complete without inclusion of them a step above the rest. Besides showmanship, Mr. Griffith injected poetic feeling into films at a time when slapstick and crudeness were preferred. Miss Pickford was first to stylize screen acting with small, economical gestures that focused the eye upon her face. Strange as it may seem to those who remember her

as the great star she became, her acting was often slightly satirical, in films such as *The New York Hat* and *Who Spilled the Milk?* She was the first actress to be known by name. Advertisements in the trade concealed the identity of players who attracted the exhibitor and film-goer. A synopsis of the plot was all the information that got by. Flaring posters outside theatres published the title only. Producers conspired to keep players in the dark concerning the circulation of their films. They blacked out any sign of popularity. Otherwise the actors might get big ideas of their value, might even insist upon the protection of a contract. It was better to keep them in a state of gratitude for work.

Miss Pickford changed all this. So strongly did she appeal as an actress without a name that the public forced one of its own making upon her. It was oddly like her own. They dubbed her "Little Mary." Only insiders knew her other name. She had been playing nightly for several years to hundreds of thousands before her name appeared in a newspaper. That was forced by the unusual occurrence of a large company of film players being sent to Havana and the secret marriage of Miss Pickford to Owen Moore. The British public insisted upon naming American players to suit English ears. They called Mabel Normand "Muriel Fortescue."

As surely as projection machines lighted up all over the world just so surely did Miss Pickford hasten recognition of all players in pictures. I daresay, too, that her vaunted business ability from the first did much to encourage her fellows to forget the fun of acting for the fun of forcing wages higher than any of them had ever dreamed of getting. But there were many who valiantly carried on without her talent for acting or for aggrandizement.

As late as 1915 one of the big personalities of earliest films was receiving only two hundred and fifty dollars a week for starring as well as directing. I refer to Arthur Johnson. He had more talent than business ability. Son of a Massachusetts clergyman he was the aristocrat of his day, the first romantic idol. Like all players of that period he was not typed as stars are today. The flood of single-reel films did not permit it.

One week a righteous hero, the next week a clerk led astray by bad company, then a derelict reclaimed by a Salvation Army lassie, even a grandfather up to tricks with the children, that was the repertory of those first favorites.

We find such immutable heroines as Norma Talmadge playing adventuresses in the old days—disguising her seventeen years with heavy make-up and not hesitating to mother a grown daughter. Miss Pickford was also not above facing the test of versatility. Her little-girl heroine of later years was preceded by a wide range of ingenues, some of them beyond the age of adolescence.

All this told us our favorites were actresses who could play almost anything. They pitched in and acted for the love of it. They were unafraid of losing our sympathy if they happened not to be photographed from the most flattering angle. They knew they could win us back in next week's release before anyone had a chance to raise the dread cry, "Is she slipping?" They did not have careers to nurse but jobs to hold onto.

However, with the coming of recognition came also money, big money for some. Pictures gained popularity and prestige but they lost something too. Prosperity for some meant the happy, carefree days were over. Now they must fight for parts they considered 'right'—and not seize any opportunity to face the camera. They could not do as they pleased any more. Publicity was crowding out privacy.

Charlie Chaplin was sweeping the country, packing movie theatres. Newspapers considered a million-dollar contract worth space they denied films as mere entertainment. Mr. Chaplin's vogue began with the children. They discovered him first, went wild about him. In slums and in nice neighborhoods they imitated his walk on the streets. They dressed as Charlie Chaplin for parties. Competitions were popular with prizes for those who could most successfully shuffle like Chaplin and twirl a cane at the same time. He was the greatest clown the world has ever known. Then people a great deal older than children, people who wrote books, discovered something about Chaplin which the kids had not thought about at all. They called

him a name that did not mean a thing to young minds. They said he was a genius, loaded the woe of the world upon his little back, insisted that he was a symbol of frustration and tragedy, not just a funny tramp with a wiggle. Mr. Chaplin stopped going to Hollywood parties, stayed home and played the organ. He became the screen's first great recluse. As much as anything, that meant the passing of the old days.

But it pointed the way to progress also. Discovery of Mr. Chaplin's genius by the few, led intellectuals to see films for the first time and decide for themselves. They increased the ever-widening audience. They aided pictures by their attendance, discussion and demand for betterment. They were part of the vast, permanent audience that passed another milestone on the road which takes us farther and farther away from the old days and the dominant personalities. With the whole world, they watched Mary Pickford cut off her curls and decide at thirty-six to meet the facts of life for the first time on the screen in *Coquette*.

I do not think I go too far in pointing to this as the end of all the dominant personalities in early films. Those who still carried on were few in number, their day of greatest glory as stars was done. Other survivors were found in small parts, a new generation scarcely seeing them and never guessing that at one time they were heroes and heroines without a peer.

Looking down the corridor of years, I cannot but see the discovery of Mr. Chaplin's genius and the removal of Miss Pickford's ringlets from her head to a golden casket as two epochs that we should note with a smile or a tear, whichever comes easier in this year of commemoration.

Travels of a Camera Man in the 90s

(Continued from page 12)

time was notorious. Poor Dreyfus was then a prisoner in Devil's Island, the victim of a

most cruel conspiracy, as we all know now. While in Europe, many people asked me why we didn't have pictures of Dreyfus and his trial, and it struck the concessionaire that it would be a good idea to get some. It didn't occur to him that poor Dreyfus had been tried and condemned before the Cinematographe was sufficiently perfected to take any pictures.

But we got together a series of scenes—a body of troops marching, a shot of the Palais de Justice, a battle ship, a court-room scene and showed them as "Captain Dreyfus, Marching at the Head of His Company Before His Arrest and Conviction", "The Trial of Captain Dreyfus", "The Ship Which Took the Convicted Man to Devil's Island", and so on. The audiences fairly jumped out of their seats and asked to have them run again and again. Then one day an elderly man—a French professor, I think—came to me after I had shown the pictures and said: "Why do you run such a fraud?" He knew they couldn't be genuine and told me so. I was ashamed and we never showed the fake Dreyfus pictures again. But I am told that to do so was only show business and that many of those who came after us did much worse in fooling the public. So I don't feel so badly about it now. After all, it didn't hurt poor Dreyfus.

Well, I was traveling for more than five years for M. Lumiere with his Cinematographe. In 1900, after visiting most every country in the world, I returned to Paris to what I thought was the end of the motion picture business. I had photographed nearly everything there was to be photographed in the world and didn't think there was anything left of importance. That was forty years ago, yet here I am telling you about it now, and there still seems to be a great deal remaining to be photographed before the public and the world tire of the motion picture. I only wish I could be here forty or fifty years from now, to see what great advances the movie will have made in that time! And it all had its beginning in a little magic box—as I told you, only a little bigger than an ordinary hatbox—the Cinematographe.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Grapes of Wrath

Screenplay by Nunnally Johnson from John Steinbeck's novel, directed by John Ford, photographed by Gregg Toland, music by Alfred Newman. Produced and distributed by Twentieth Century Fox.

The Cast

Tom Joad	Henry Fonda
Ma Joad	Jane Darwell
Pa Joad	Russell Simpson
Grampa	Charles Grapewin
Granma	Zeffie Tilbury
Rosasharn	Doris Bowdon
Al	O. Z. Whitehead
Noah	Frank Sully
Ruthie	Shirley Mills
Winfield	Darryl Hickman
Casey	John Corradine
Muley	John Qualen
Connie	Eddie Quillan
Uncle John	Frank Darien
Camp superintendent	Grant Mitchell
Policeman	Ward Bond
Davis	John Arledge

THIS isn't one of the films that need a lot of explaining to tell why they deserve to be called great. Unlike so many movies that are now counted among the masterpieces it doesn't have to have footnotes to call attention to its importance or its excellencies. The book from which it was taken has prepared a lot of ground for what to look for, and a lot of speculation about whether Hollywood would dare to put it on the screen honestly and sincerely has created a good deal of curiosity about how it would turn out. To those who know something about John Steinbeck's novel it is enough to say that the picture is way ahead of anything even the most hopeful had much reason to expect. To everyone, readers of the novel or not, one simple statement tells the truth: here is a film that belongs up beside—at

least—the best the screen has ever done. And you have only to see the film to see why. What it is is as apparent as the sun in the sky on a clear day. Whether you like it or not is a question of your personal reaction.

It is all beautifully direct and literal, like clear-cut themes in a symphony. You can go back and discover new effects in the orchestration, which is unobtrusively elaborate, but the main motifs are announced from the first and maintained till the end. There is Tom Joad, on parole from prison, going back to his family on their farm. The shell of a farmhouse, deserted, the family blown out by dust-storms and tractor-farming. The family, found again, setting out westward in their junky old truck, for work and a place to settle on the soil once more. The long trek west, over the endless inter-state highways, joining the miserable stream of other families driven away from their own birth-right and seeking a promised land of home and work again. Managing somehow to make the truck keep holding together, and managing somehow to eat, the Joad family jolts through New Mexico, Arizona, at last to California, dwindling as it goes: Grampa dies, Granma dies, Noah just disappears, Connie gets too discouraged and runs away. And in California there are thousands just like them, people looking for work in a place where the workers are too many, the jobs too few.

Nunnally Johnson had to do something more with Steinbeck's book than cut pages out of it and paste them together. He had to dramatize it, which meant concentrating its essence while he built it to mounting action and emotion. A lot that Steinbeck might have done to his novel in the way

of economy and good taste (good taste not in the parlor, prissy sense but in the sense of clean cutting instead of haphazard, emotion-driven chopping) has been accomplished in this dramatization, but no one can say that Steinbeck's spirit or intention has been anywhere betrayed. What shifts in incident and emphasis have been made are all to the good. Some may say, as some have said, that the picture only scratches the surface of the truth, or that it would have been more generally representative if Tom Joad had been an ordinary decent citizen instead of a jail-bird. Well, Tom *is* a decent citizen—that he was in jail and came out not hardened into a criminal, not “mean-mad” as his mother put it, gives him just that special strength of character above the dead-level ordinary, that rock-bottom touch of the heroic, which puts lift and thrill into the semi-mystical words he speaks to his mother in their last farewell; his renunciation of an individual life to become a part of the fight for the hungry, the beaten, the knocked-about miserable—everywhere. And as for just scratching the surface, by making the story a family story, perhaps to some a mere “mother-love” story, with the final implication that families—those primal units of mankind—cannot be crushed and destroyed but go on generation after generation preserving the seed and spirit of human life—what audience, or what individual, could endure a picture that told them these families are not enduring and persisting but actually dying off, that there is no hope at all? Steinbeck told his tale of hopelessness, eloquent in arousing pity and indignation but pointing no way of remedy. The picture, in Tom Joad and Ma Joad, lets a bit of light in by a hint that the spirit of man is not to be conquered and snuffed out. And, less mystically, there is the government camp, switched toward the latter part of the picture where its contrast with the previous wretchedness is more effective, unobtrusively, and without specific pointing, suggesting that there is a way, slow perhaps and with a long difficult road ahead of it, to remedy the conditions that blight so many lives. If that be New Deal propaganda, make the most of it—and note, as compensation, that the manager of the camp in the person of Grant Mitchell is not a stalwart

enough crusader to throw a scare into the rugged individualists.

If Nunnally Johnson's script narrows the gist of the story to only what happens to the Joad family, John Ford in his direction has spread it wide again, in the way that only a movie can do. With the magnificent help of Gregg Toland's camera he has created a whole vast section of country and a multitude of people to embank his main stream. Countless subtleties of movie photography have gone into the universalizing of the Joad family's modernized ironic version of a covered-wagon journey to a new land. One supreme example is that entrance to a camp, shot from the jostling truck, where the shacks as well as the people seem to be tumbling and fleeing. Over and over again the camera has supplied details, of meanness, brutality, misery, pity, human fellowship, that no narrative or dialogue could possibly reveal. And the use of sound is as eloquent as the use of picture—silence filled with meaning by the far-off sound of a train whistle, or a rooster crowing in the dawn, or the eternal theme of the truck coughing and sputtering and rattling along its endless road. There is, too, Ford's fondness for mist and shadows and music—but all in their place here, integral and rarely mannered.

The chief thing about the acting is that it almost never seems to be acting at all. Perhaps John Carradine and Grant Mitchell give an occasional impression of doing their stuff, but the rest, from the most casual extra to the stars, might have been caught, without costume or make-up, in some episode of actual life. Henry Fonda and Jane Darwell are the most important because they embody the main spirit of the drama: they both fill their parts with such life, the life that lies back of mere looking and speaking, that they are more than mere actors in a movie. Other people are less important only because they are less in the foreground, but just as much an element in the livingness of the picture—people like John Qualen and Russell Simpson and Charles Grapewin and Doris Bowdon, if it isn't invidious to name a few out of so many.

One wants to believe that *The Grapes of Wrath* is a milestone in movies, that the daring which went into its production will prove

something about the theory of what the public wants that has so restricted the subject matter of motion pictures. If it is a milestone, by turning out to be a box-office hit and leading producers to tackle other important problems of life with equal honesty and effectiveness, it will go down in the history books. It proves that Hollywood can lead the world in serious as well as merely entertaining pictures: it has done its kind of thing so supremely well that

it is a fair test. If it is a box-office failure—which so far it doesn't appear to be—it is a proof, not that Hollywood is unresponsive to the times and the needs of the times, but that movie audiences are indifferent and hostile to real life on the screen. In that case *The Grapes of Wrath* will not be a milestone but a magnificent monument over a lost cause.

(Rated exceptional)

J.S.H.



Betty Field and Burgess Meredith in "Of Mice and Men"

Of Mice and Men

Screenplay by Eugene Solow from John Steinbeck's novel, directed by Lewis Milestone, photographed by Norbert Brodine, music by Aaron Copeland, produced by Hal Roach, distributed by United Artists.

The cast

George	Burgess Meredith
Lennie	Lon Chaney, Jr.
Mae	Betty Field
Slim	Charles Bickford
Candy	Roman Bohnen
Curley	Bob Steel
Whit	Noah Beery, Jr.

Carlson	Granville Bates
Jackson	Oscar O'Shea
Crooks	Leigh Whipper

THIS is John Steinbeck month in the movies, and if *The Grapes of Wrath* had not come along at the same time, *Of Mice and Men* would be all alone among pictures of its kind. Can two swallows make more of a spring than one?

It is natural to compare the two pictures because of their authorship and because they are alike in having unfortunate people for

their characters. But that comparison isn't necessary, and in some ways it isn't fair, because their stories differ so much in kind and in scope. Perhaps it is enough to say that each has been superlatively done for what is in it, and that *The Grapes of Wrath* being a general subject and *Of Mice and Men* a very special one they can't be weighed against each other except in importance. Of which is more important as a picture and criticism of life everyone must judge for himself.

First a novel, then a play, *Of Mice and Men* might have been written with the stage in mind: it naturally falls into scene divisions, with a lot of its drama presented in dialogue. That Lewis Milestone has broken that almost inevitable mold, rehandled the material and made it move in the flow-eddy-flow style of the screen and yet kept the essentials of events and characters true to their author's conception, is in itself a director's triumph. But he has done more than that—he has put an intensity into it, a tragic sense of doom, and a prevailing, understanding compassion, that Steinbeck, with all his violent sympathy with his creations, never quite achieved.

It is a pitiful story, of some unfortunate men who dreamed a dream of having a home of their own, with a garden to eat from, working for themselves with no boss to rout them out of bed in the morning, the privilege of loafing or going to the circus without anybody's permission. Just "bindle-stiffs," migratory farm workers tramping from job to job, this dream meant heaven-on-earth to them, but things happened, those fatal things that can't be called anyone's particular fault, and their plans went astray.

It will be a dismal story to many people because there's no special villain you can blame, no clear-cut force of evil to stir a definite indignation and rouse a resolve, however fleeting, to do something about it. It is even more dismal because Lennie, the man on whose peculiar nature everything turns, is after all just an idiot, a painfully pathetic creature with whom nothing can be done except restrain him from himself. Idiots aren't sound dramatic material because they are so unsound in themselves, there's no possible chance, without maybe a doctor's

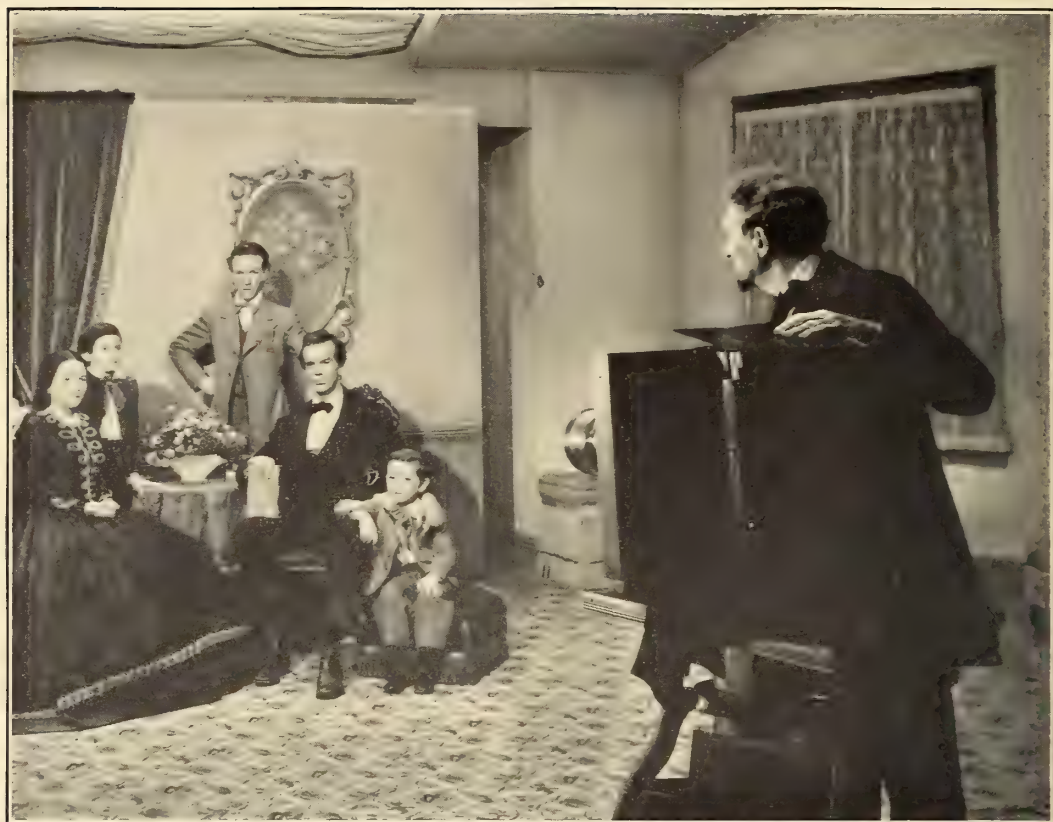
help, for them to work out any salvation. They are simply pathological.

But Milestone has soft-pedalled Lennie to a considerable degree, and toned down a lot of Steinbeck's violence, to say nothing of his profanity. And this, by a miracle of pity and understanding, without weakening the characters or their miseries. Only once does something like out-and-out sob-stuff rear its head, in the prolonged agony of Candy's old dog being shot. The setting is expansive with its land and sky and yet curiously intimate, the relation between the men and the land they work on, and the ranch buildings in which so much of their working life is lived, kept close and vivid—a restraining relation with only an occasional escape to some near-by town for the movies or a night of ranchman's fun. The men themselves are shown with a sharp and accurate discernment of their individualities as well as their common characteristics: the ranch-boss with his worries, his boy Curly with his unhappy jealousy, Slim the mule-skinner, strong and efficient and wise in the ways of life, Candy the old man barely able to keep a job cleaning up the bunk-house and scared of the future, the negro Crooks—surely one of the profoundest all-round pictures of the working negro the screen has had. There are the new arrivals at the ranch, Lennie, and George with his spunky ways and gift for planning, atoning with patient and protective friendship for a careless cruelty to Lennie back in their boyhood. And Curly's young wife, with her vitality, her loneliness, her cheap little reachings after prettiness and tinsel glamor—a much better motivated and understandable girl than Steinbeck pictured. Milestone has made them all vividly alive, helped immeasurably by actors who get into the skin and spirit of their parts — Betty Field, Charles Bickford, Burgess Meredith, Bob Steel, Leigh Whipper, Roman Bohnen, to name the outstanding ones.

Steinbeck's tragedy was theatrical, Milestone and Eugene Salow's script have given it dignity, inevitability and an unusual strain of excitement. If what happens to the people is outside the universal to the point of being bizarre, the people themselves are universal in their humanness.

J.S.H.

(Rated *Exceptional*)



Posing for a family photograph in "Abe Lincoln in Illinois"

Abe Lincoln in Illinois

Screenplay by Robert E. Sherwood from his stage play, directed by John Cromwell, photographed by James Wong Howe, music by Roy Webb, produced by Max Gordon, distributed by RKO-Radio.

The cast

Abraham Lincoln	Raymond Massey
Mary Todd Lincoln	Ruth Gordon
Stephen A. Douglas	Gene Lockhart
Ann Rutledge	Mary Howard
Billy Herndon	Alan Baxter
Ninian Edwards	Henry Stephens
Elizabeth Edwards	Dorothy Tree
Joshua Speed	Minor Watson
Jack Armstrong	Howard de Silva
Judge Bowling Green	Aldrich Bowker
Mentor Graham	Louis Jean Heydt
Sarah Lincoln	Elizabeth Risdon

ANY picture about Abraham Lincoln done with inherent dignity and sincerity and skill is hard to judge on its own merits because we bring so much to it from our own emotions about Lincoln that the interfusion of our feelings with the picture itself is apt to make us put aside a

critical viewpoint that we might apply to a less stirring subject. Within a comparatively short time there have been two films about Lincoln that have brought the man to life with moving vividness. *Young Mr. Lincoln*, looking back upon it, seems to have done something better within the limitations of its title: it was *young* Lincoln in a simple story that gave Henry Fonda beautiful scope for a portrayal of youth feeling its way toward manhood. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* covers far more detail, and extends to the momentous day when Lincoln took the train from Springfield to be inaugurated President. Naturally, as the man develops and comes closer to his destiny, he grows in stature and meaning, and we forget that the youthful friendship with Ann Rutledge came off as hardly more than a pretty and pathetic movie romance.

It is Lincoln's struggle against his destiny, and his acceptance of it, with that strange certainty he seems to have had that it was also doom, which is the heart of this picture.

As he grows toward it, pushed by his wife, by his friends, and by something in himself, while he still remains the same Abe in all his ordinary ways and mannerisms, he begins to tower in spirit, till his last speech in the Douglas debates, the assertion of his own dignity against his wife's hysteria, and his farewell to his fellow townsmen at the end, glow with the simple but tremendously moving heroism than Lincoln has come to mean to us.

Robert Sherwood has skillfully put together a lot of incidents that show Lincoln briefly but revealingly in the more homely incidents of his life, as store-keeper and postmaster, as a soldier, as a legislator who is not being fooled by politics, and they are all lighted up with the humor that kept Lincoln so close to the average man. After his mar-

riage the bigger man begins to emerge, and it is as the big man that he looms at the end.

Raymond Massey grows as the part grows, and stands out against the more stereotyped figures who are sometimes little more than cartoons surrounding him. Mary Todd Lincoln may be something of a puzzle, as she is likely always to be, Stephen Douglas (made so astonishingly like the photographs by Gene Lockhart) may make you wonder why he was ever called the Little Giant, and people like Billy Herndon and Horace Greeley little more than illustrations clipped out of a picture book, but Lincoln himself Raymond Massey has made big and vital, a splendidly stirring figure to carry away in memory from the theatre to add to your permanent inner picture of the man.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J.S.H.



Margaret Sullivan applying for a job in "The Shop Around the Corner"

The Shop Around the Corner

Screenplay by Samson Raphaelson from a play by Nikolaus Laszlo, directed by Ernest

Lubitsch, photographed by William Daniels, music by Werner R. Haymann, produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

Klara Novak Margaret Sullivan
Alfred Kralik James Stewart
Hugo Matuschek Frank Morgan

Pirovitch *Felix Bressart*
Ferencz Vadas *Joseph Schildkraut*
Flora *Sara Haden*
Pepi Katona *William Tracy*
Ilona *Inez Courtney*
Woman Customer *Sarah Edwards*
Doctor *Edwin Maxwell*
Detective *Charles Halton*
Rudy *Charles Smith*

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER may be slight, but though after a year it may be remembered vaguely it will be remembered pleasantly. It has those warm qualities that Lubitsch seems to have discovered within himself of late, not over-sentimentalized and presented with a humorous kindliness. It is romantic in a lively, almost jolly way, and its substance is no newer and no more important than that familiar plot about a fellow and girl who are in love with each other without knowing it. But it is housed in a charmingly foreign—but not too foreign—leather-goods shop in a Central European city, and peopled by such delightful players as Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Frank Morgan (not clowning) and Felix Bressart, being themselves as well as the parts they play with ingratiating excellence. It would be a shame to lay the praise on too thick: it's not pretentious but it's a beautiful job of picture-making, and the people who did it seem to have enjoyed doing it just as much as their audiences will enjoy seeing it.

(*Rated Honorable Mention*)

J.S.H.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

m *HIS GIRL FRIDAY—Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell. Based on the play "The Front Page" by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Directed by Howard Hawks. A sophisticated comedy, fast moving and hilarious, of newspaper life. Splendid acting and clever dialogue. Columbia.

f INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE—Cedric Hardwicke, Vincent Price, Nan Grey. Story and direction by Joe May. Using the H. G. Wells formula for invisibility, a man convicted for murder escapes execution to hunt down the man responsible for his unjust conviction. Novel melodrama, well done, with fascinating camera tricks. Universal.

m KALLE PA SPANGEN (Charlie The Innkeeper)—Edvard Persson, Bullan Wijden, John Degerberg. Story by Henry Richter and Ted Berthels. Directed by Emil A. Pehrsson. A lively, amusing story about a Swedish innkeeper whose simple life gets tangled up with the police, a nagging wife, his hired girls, romance and other complications. While some of the comedy is weak there is plenty of laughter and pleasure to be got from Edvard Persson's antics and songs. Swedish audiences will get extra enjoyment from the dialogue. (English titles) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

f LION HAS WINGS, THE—Ralph Richardson, Merle Oberon. Original screen story by Ian Dalrymple. Directed by Michael Powell, Desmond Hurst, and Adrian Brunel. The first document of the war to reach this country from England. A vivid, dramatic study of Britain's planes, aircraft defense, factories, raids over German territory, methods of plotting and repelling air-raids, etc. Is frankly propagandistic in attitude, but its liveliness, splendid camera-work and editing are likely to be its most compelling features. (British Production) United Artists.

f *LITTLE OLD NEW YORK—Alice Faye, Fred MacMurray, Richard Greene. Based on the play by Rida Johnson Young. Directed by Henry King. A picturesque and entertaining story of Robert Fulton and his troubles getting people to believe in his steamboat. The atmosphere of New York when it was young is carefully reproduced. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.

m MAN WHO WOULDN'T TALK, THE—Lloyd Nolan, Onslow Stevens, Jean Rogers. Based on the play "The Valiant" by Holworthy Hall and Robert M. Middlemass. Directed by David Burton. An interesting melodrama in which a man confesses a murder but refuses to tell who he is—the truth about him, and his relations to the murdered man gradually and excitingly emerges. 20th Century-Fox.

m MY LITTLE CHICKADEE—Mae West, W. C. Fields. Original screen story by Mae West and W. C. Fields. Directed by Edward F. Cline. Mae West and W. C. Fields romp through 10 reels of a good old western melodrama, helped out by a competent cast and the usual clever West and Fields dialogue. Universal.

f *NORTHWEST PASSAGE—Spencer Tracy, Robert Young, Walter Brennan. Based on the novel by Kenneth Roberts. Directed by King Vidor. The heroic expedition of Rogers' Rangers to wipe out an Indian settlement in the French and Indian Wars.

Done with marvelous care, interesting characters and a remarkably effective use of color. One of the best pictures of American colonial times. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- m *OF MICE AND MEN — See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 18.

- f OPENED BY MISTAKE—Charles Ruggles, Janice Logan, Robert Paige. Based on a story by Hal Hudson and Kenneth Earl. Directed by George Archainbaud. A fast moving and highly amusing comedy. A reporter out to get a front page story finds real adventure and romance. Charles Ruggles as usual is excellent. Paramount.

- m REMEMBER THE NIGHT—Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray. Original screen story by Preston Sturges. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. A romantic drama. A district attorney falls in love with the girl he is prosecuting. Rather improbable, but certainly entertaining. Paramount.

- f SAINT'S DOUBLE TROUBLE, THE—George Sanders, Helene Whitney. Based on Leslie Charteris' character "The Saint." Directed by Jack Hively. The Saint—that clever, enigmatic is-he-good-or-bad adventurer—has a double, who gives him some highly improbable but entertaining escapades. For those who like fast adventure. RKO Radio.

- f SECRET FOUR, THE—Frank Lawton, Ann Lee, Griffith Jones. Based on novel "Four Just Men" by Edgar Wallace. Directed by Walter Forde. Four men righting the wrongs of the world, in Edgar Wallace's slick melodramatic style, save the British Empire in a plot managed with considerable excitement. In the present European situation the picture has propaganda overtones. Monogram.

- f *SHOP AROUND THE CORNER, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 21.

- f SIDEWALKS OF LONDON—Charles Laughton, Vivien Leigh. Original screen story by Clemence Dane. Directed by Tim Whelan. A drama of London buskers. Charles Laughton as a sidewalk entertainer befriends a young girl, who ruthlessly rises to fame, leaving the adoring Charles still on the sidewalks. Laughton's acting carries a weak story along and Vivien Leigh is good but not too convincing. (British Production) Paramount.

- fj SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON—Thomas Mitchell, Edna Best, Tim Holt, Freddie Bartholomew. Based on the novel by Johan

David Wyss. Directed by Edward Ludwig. An elegant version of the juvenile classic, in which a family is shipwrecked on a tropical island. The boys learn manliness before they are rescued. Storm and hardship make fascinating adventure, though the characters and much of the incidents are changed from the book. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.

- m VIGIL IN THE NIGHT—Carole Lombard, Brian Aherne, Anne Shirley. Based on the novel by A. J. Cronin. Directed by George Stevens. A dramatic story of a nurse's sacrifice to save her sister from disgrace. Intensely interesting with excellent acting and direction. Recommended for Libraries. RKO Radio.

- f YOUNG AS YOU FEEL—The Jones Family. Based on the play "Merry Andrew" by Lewis Beach. Directed by Malcolm St. Clair. Father Jones retires from business to play and rest—and is glad to buy his drug store back again. 20th Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- fj AQUAPOISE (Pathe Sportscope)—Marvelous aquaplaning, making good use of slow motion. RKO Radio.
- f BEAUTIFUL SWITZERLAND (Columbia Tour)—A trip through the Alps showing the wonders of lakes and mountains. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Columbia.
- f BOWLING SKILL (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Outdoor and indoor bowling, using slow motion to show expert shots. Paramount.
- f COURT FAVORITES (Pathe Sportscope)—Some very slick tennis, demonstrated by Bill Tilden, Vin Richards and others. RKO Radio.
- f CUBA (Color Cruise)—Showing the beauties of Cuba. Paramount.
- fj FUTURAMA (Cinescope)—An interesting camera trip through one of the New York World's Fair's most popular exhibits. Columbia.
- f HUMAN FISH (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Newton Perry, the marvelous under-water swimmer. Some good shots with slow motion. Paramount.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 5 & 6—The popular radio program brought to the screen with Clifton Fadiman asking the questions. RKO Radio.
- f ISLE OF COLUMBUS (Color Cruise)—A color cruise to the lovely island of Columbus in the West Indies, showing the scenic beauties and the occupations of the natives. Paramount.
- f MAINTAIN THE RIGHT (Pete Smith Specialty)—How the Royal Canadian Mounted is recruited and trained. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj *MARCH OF TIME No. 6—The Republic of Finland—an excellent resume of Finland's history, what sort of country it is, and how she is fighting against Soviet Russia. Intensely sympathetic to the Finns, and an eloquent tribute to that country. RKO Radio.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 3 (Color Parade)—Covers salmon canning; light without fire; liquid silk, etc. Vitaphone.
- f MEN OF MUSCLE (Reelism)—Training athletic instructors at Springfield College. RKO Radio.
- f NEW HORIZONS (Color Parade)—Colorful picture of Alaska. Vitaphone.

- f NIGHT DESCENDS ON TREASURE ISLAND (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—Night scenes, in color, of the Treasure Island at the San Francisco Fair. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj OLD SOUTH, THE (MGM Miniature)—The influence of cotton on the history of the southern states. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f ORIENTERINGSLOPING (Pathfinders) — Interesting picture of Swedish runners in the sport of pathfinding. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL (Paragraphic)—Solo Flights; training aviators; speaking of hats; styles for men. Paramount.
- f PARENSKILJNING I AKKA (Reindeer Round-up In Akka, Lapland, Sweden)—Has excellent studies of huge reindeer herds. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 4—Done in color. Indoor chicken raising; how dyes were invented; kitchen gadgets; how the government protects the salmon. Paramount.
- f *SIEGE (Reelism)—Julian Bryan, RKO-Pathé newscameraman, shows and describes shots he made while Warsaw was besieged by the Germans. Grim and highly impressive; unique of its kind. RKO Radio.
- f SKY GAME (Pathé Sportscope)—Fine study of duck-hunting. RKO Radio.
- fj *SUGAR WIND (Paragraphic)—A lovely picture. Molasses making in the Barbados. Nice singing by the natives. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Paramount.
- fj TEDDY THE ROUGH RIDER (Historical Technicolor Featurette)—Simple and vivid resume of Theodore Roosevelt's life. Vitaphone.
- f TOPNOTCH TENNIS (Ed Thorgersen Sports)—Tennis stars in practice and in crucial games. 20th Century-Fox.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 3 — Strange ways of making money; sipping straws made into decorations; getting pearls out of the Mississippi River; making gadgets out of gourds; Frank Clark does stunt flying for the films. Paramount.
- f VACATION DIARY (Reelism) — What two stenographers do to enjoy a two-week vacation in Bermuda. RKO Radio.
- fj VALLEY OF 10,000 SMOKES, THE—One of Father Hubbard's adventures in Alaska. 20th Century-Fox.
- f VI GAR PA LANGTUR (We Take A Long Ski Trip)—Good action studies against attractive backgrounds. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 2 (Treasury Department)—An interesting and instructive picture showing how paper money is made and also what happens to worn out money. Columbia.
- f WEST WALL (Reelism)—A survey of the fighting on the Western Front. Interesting and instructive. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.

Musicals, Cartoons and Comedies

- f BLUE DANUBE, THE—A pleasant fantasy in color, a cartoon explanation of why the Danube is blue. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj FISHING BEAR, THE—A delightfully amusing cartoon, with a new kind of duck. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj HARVEST TIME (Terry-Toon)—A color cartoon with a good deal of charm. 20th Century-Fox.
- f JIMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Headliners)—Some good swing music with Helen O'Connell singing. Paramount.
- f *MAD MAESTRO, THE (Color Cartoon)—An unusually clever and funny cartoon about an orchestra and its temperamental conductor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj MIGHTY HUNTERS (Merrie Melody)—Delightful cartoon of Swinnerton's cliff-dwelling Indians. Vitaphone.
- fj KITENS' MITTENS (Color Cartoon)—The three little kittens who lost their mittens, with some variations, and a lesson not to tell lies. Universal.
- f YOU NAZTY SPY—The Three Stooges in an amusing take-off of the headmen in a dictator country. Has some good mimicry and effectively satirizes dictatorial ambitions. Columbia.



NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

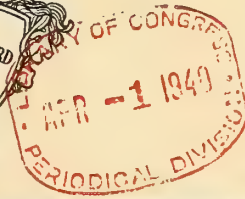
The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences. Its pioneer activity has done much to lay the foundation for the Little Photoplay Theatre movement and to stimulate the organization of subscription groups to develop audiences for the support of the creative achievements of the screen.



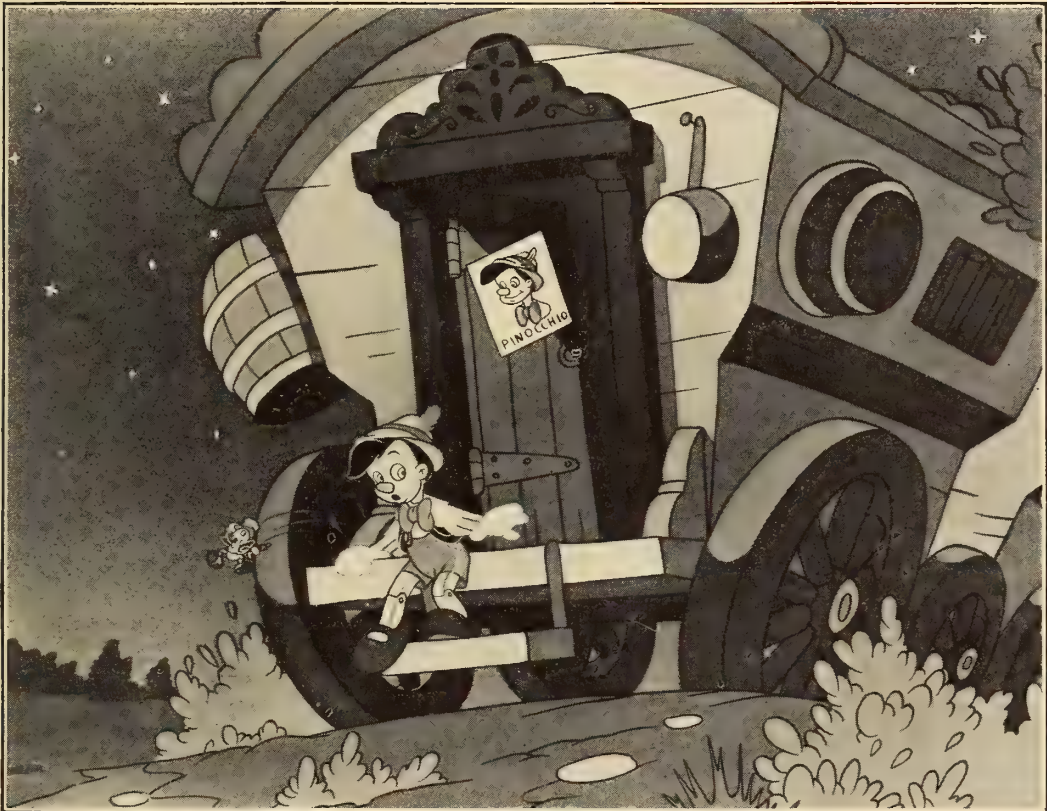
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 3



March, 1940



Pinocchio escapes from the puppet showman (see page 10)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

m BAKER'S WIFE, THE (La Femme du Boulanger) — See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 17.

fj BULLET CODE—George O'Brien, Virginia Vale. Original screen story by Bennett Cohen. Directed by David Howard. About a cowboy who believes he is responsible for the death of his sweetheart's brother and tries to save the bereaved family from border-running rustlers. Somewhat better than the average Western. RKO-Radio.

† *DR. EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLET — See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13.

f DOUBLE ALIBI—Wayne Morris, Margaret Lindsay. Based on story by Frederick C. Davis. Directed by Philip Rosen. The usual murder mystery with the girl reporter getting the "scoop." Universal.

f FOLKET PA HOGBOGARDEN (The People of the Hogbo Farm)—Anna-Lisa Ericsson, Peter Hoglund. Based on the play by Jeppe Aakjaer. Directed by Arne Veel. A pretty little picture about people on a Swedish farm at the beginning of the century. Has much of the sort of dated hero-villain-heroine material that was popular on the stage at that time, but the charm of its simple characters and the attractiveness of its pretty star fit well with the lovely countryside and natural atmosphere. (English sub-titles) Swedish production. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

f GRANNY GET YOUR GUN—May Robson, Harry Davenport. Original screen story by Kenneth Gamet. Directed by George Amy. A melodrama for May Robson fans only—in which, as a roaring relic of frontier days, she tries to shield a grand-daughter from a murder charge and eventually uncovers the murderer. Warner Bros.

f HALF A SINNER—Heather Angel, John King. Original screen story by Dalton Trumbo. Directed by Al Christie. A very amusing story of a school teacher who kicks over the traces for one day, getting involved in a murder, a stolen car, and finding love and happiness at the end of the day. Clever dialogue. Universal.

f *HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES, THE—Vincent Price, Margaret Lindsay. Based on novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Directed by Joe May. The story of a curse on a family who occupy a gloomy old home in England. Betrayed by his brother, an innocent man goes to prison for twenty years. He is finally released and returns to the woman who has waited for him. Nice photoplay. Recommended for Libraries. Universal.

m HUMAN BEAST, THE (La Bete Humaine) — See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 15.

f IL FIGLIO DEL CONTADINO (The Farmer's Son) or Voce Lontana (Voice from Afar)—Gianfranco Giachetti, Sandra Ravel. A young man on a farm listens to his radio, hears a girl singing and promptly falls in love. This infatuation nearly wrecks his life, but at last through his father's help, he is persuaded to marry a village girl who can provide him with real happiness. The action is slow but the photography is good, and the film will appeal to those who speak the language. (Italian production) Piedmont American Film Exchange Inc.

fj *PINOCCHIO — See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 10.

f ROAD TO SINGAPORE — Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Bob Hope, Charles Coburn. Original screen story by Harry Hervey. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. An amusing piece of farce, in which two neer-do-well sailors, one a wealthy man's heir, run away to the East and "go native" in the hope of escaping matrimony at home. Feminine dangers turn out to be quite as frequent, of course, in Singapore as they were at home. Has some pretty songs, but the comedy is the best feature. Paramount.

(Continued on page 23)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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BETTINA GUNCZY



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James Shelley Hamilton Appointed Executive Director of the National Board

AFTER nine years on the staff of the National Board of Review, Mr. James Shelley Hamilton has been appointed to succeed Wilton A. Barrett as Executive Director of the organization.

Mr. Hamilton is probably better known to New York members of the Board than he is to those from out of town. For nine years he has served as secretary to the New York review committees and, in that capacity, has probably seen more motion pictures than any other critic or reviewer in the country. In addition to his work as Review Secretary he has headed the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays for many years and most of the reports on the findings and decisions of this committee have gone out under his signature. The large majority of reviews of exceptional pictures, published in the National Board of Review Magazine, have been written by him, along with many articles relating to the motion picture, all of which have made him well-known to readers of the magazine everywhere.

Mr. Hamilton was born in Orange, Massachusetts and educated at Montague High School and Amherst College, leaving the latter with A.B. and M.A. degrees. To Amherst and, indeed, to college glee-clubs throughout the country, he gave the college song "Lord Jeffery Amherst," now one of the most widely known songs of its kind.

After leaving college he turned to writing and wrote magazine fiction, critical articles, juvenile books and college songs, while do-

ing editorial work with D. Appleton & Co., G. J. Putnam's Sons and the Butterick and Ridgeway magazines. It was at this time that he first met Wilton Barrett and began an association that brought him into close contact with the work of the National Board. At different periods he was on the General Committee and in its earliest days the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays.

As dramatic critic of "Everybody's" Mr. Hamilton was one of the first critics to write about the motion picture in a national magazine and to accord it the prominence he felt it deserved.

In 1917 he became a member of the A.E.F. and served two years in France with a medical unit. After the war he started work in movies as a writer of serials for Pathe. With that as an apprenticeship he went to the Famous Players Studio in Astoria and then to Hollywood as a scenario writer for Famous Players-Lasky and Fox Films. Later activities included the Editorship of "Cinema", a monthly film journal, and the titling of such famous Russian silent films as *Storm Over Asia* and *Arsenal*.

Following a visit to France in 1930, he joined the staff of the National Board in 1931. He took over the post of Review Secretary and has remained with the Board ever since. His appointment is certain to be a popular one with the review members who have enjoyed his secretaryship for the past eight years and with followers of his writing in the Magazine.

The Story Content of Early Films

By ROBERT GESSNER

Mr. Gessner is an instructor in English and teacher of a course on the cinema as literary art at New York University, where he will conduct a class this summer in the technique of writing and screen treatment. He presented the following address at the National Board Conference in February.

WE are here today in celebration of what might be somewhat facetiously called fifty years of progress. As you may agree with me, it seems as though the motion picture has been in for at least a hundred years of abuse. Consequently, I do not wish to add my bit of abuse by attempting in the fifteen minutes allotted me to tell you about the fifty years of story content.

I should like, however, in this period to speak about the relationship of the narrative to the art of the motion picture, and also to discuss briefly as necessary three or four of the leading great story-tellers of the screen.

I believe that in attempting to understand the motion picture as a new form of art it is essential to understand it primarily as a form of story telling. Consequently, it might be said that the motion picture is the twentieth century way of telling a story. Only from this type of definition is it possible to explain the unprecedented popularity of the motion picture.

There are more people today in one week seeing movies than the aggregate number who are reading or seeing plays, or reading novels and short stories. Now, this is an astounding fact, and it can be explained only by simply saying that the motion picture tells a story with more excitement, vitality, reality, and also with more dreams and fancy, yet with a semblance of living life, than any other form of story telling ever invented. In fact, we might say that the most important invention in the history of culture and of mankind, since the invention of the printing press, is the invention of the motion picture camera.

This interpretation of the motion picture as a story-telling art may seem peculiar to some people. It does not seem peculiar to people who are working in the industry. As one who has worked in Hollywood, and who has taught several courses on the motion picture, I have come through tests and experimentation to the belief that it is primarily a story-telling medium.

Now, who are the great story-tellers of the early screen days? The motion picture started off as a recording of life. It still is that. But in making a record of life they shot scenes as they were, in the early days. It was what we call "reportage." Lumiere did it in France, and the first picture that Edison made was of a sneeze over in the Oranges.

Incidentally, it makes you realize how young the motion picture industry is when you think that all of the great men who contributed to its art and creation are still alive—with the exception of Melies, who died but two years ago. Melies was a Frenchman who was directing a theatre in Paris and who happened to see the news reportage that Lumiere had done. He became so engrossed with the possibility of recording life and telling stories that he offered ten thousand francs to Lumiere for a camera. You have learned from M. Doublier* how rare those early cameras were. Melies bid twenty thousand, then thirty thousand francs, his house, his wife—anything for a camera. The man went insane with his need for a camera. Lumiere told him that with a passion of that type he would eventually go broke. Eventually he did.

But at last he succeeded in getting a camera from Paul in London and he proceeded for the first time to use the camera as a story-telling medium. The first magic must be traced to Melies, as an impresario; and being of the stage he knew how to create

* Also a speaker at the Conference. His talk was published in the February issue of the Magazine.

magic with the camera. The early productions of Melies are still exciting to us because of the free use of imagination—the first imaginative use of the camera.

Secondly, he was the first man to use the camera for *movement* as distinct from the reportage of Lumiere. Hitherto there had been static pictures of a train coming into one of the stations in Paris, of a wave breaking over the rocks in the North Sea, of a cavalry charge by a famous brigade of cavalymen in the French army. These were so exciting to people when they were shown in a hall in Paris (there were no theatres: people were seated on platforms) that many ran out in panic when the waves broke over the rocks and the horses charged, for fear they would drown or be crushed under the horses' hooves.

This element of reality, of being able to portray life as one saw it, was the thing that excited Melies.

His early pictures were based upon literature, upon fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and *The Arabian Nights*. Others came from fantastic stories, like those of Jules Verne, or from some of the painters of the day.

Before he went to work pictures were only three minutes long—some of them even shorter. Melies extended their length to a reel. Where they had had but one scene he gave them thirty.

One of the most noteworthy pictures of the early days was *Cinderella*. The idea of a good fairy suddenly exploding out of mist, or smoke, was incredible. But Melies' talent was given full play in *A Trip to the Moon*. That was in 1902—the year after M. Doublier returned to Paris, when he thought the motion picture was finished. In 1902 people left the earth and went to the moon, and lived and explored, in Melies' picture. Queer animals lived in the moon, and they were photographed exploding out of trapdoors and coming out from behind weird-looking rocks and trees. In other words, pure fantasy was given free play, as never before in literature or on the stage.

Unfortunately, by the time Melies reached his maturity other people had taken on the work where he left off, developing it in terms of comedy. Another Frenchman, Ferdinand

Zecca, in 1907 inaugurated the first chase; a horse and wagon dashing through the streets, running through brick walls, etc.

Melies was the first to use camera tricks, stopping the camera and having people leap into the air, apparently defying the laws of gravity and nature. Zecca continued that in a comic tradition.

Now we come to American story-tellers who exploited the vein of comedy. The first important one, of course, is Mack Sennett, who took up the camera tricks and fantastic comedy where Melies left off. He developed more varied phases of camera tricks than the Frenchman did. But his greatest contribution came in the form of the gag—of making a sharp type of laughter in the midst of a scene. This came, of course, from his experience in vaudeville, where the gag is an essential feature of comedy. Coming from vaudeville to the motion picture Sennett brought that same important sense of timing, of telling the joke in a way in which it could proceed rapidly. He was the first to cut scenes sharply in terms of audience reaction, something that Hollywood has not yet entirely learned in all its aspects.

Sennett's transition from a choir boy to a great impresario of the screen is one of the most amusing incidents and sidelights of the early days. Few people know that he was a member of the Baptist choir and sang for no less a personage than John D. Rockefeller, Sr., who was one of the supporters of the church. When Sennett heard that Mr. Rockefeller was giving millions of dollars to cure pellagra in the South, he decided it was a good time to ask for a raise. He was refused, whereupon he denounced Mr. Rockefeller, and said if he could give millions of dollars to the worms and couldn't give a few more to the choir boy, he would go to the movies. This he did, and it was our gain and Mr. Rockefeller's loss, though Mr. Rockefeller Jr., tried to make up for it by giving us Radio City and the Music Hall.

Mack Sennett belongs to a very important triangle in the early history of the American motion picture. With Griffith and Ince he formed the Triangle Corporation, which produced many of the early great movies. These three men more than anyone else, including

Melies, laid the emotional and technical foundation for the motion picture in America. By that, we may as well say, in the world. By the end of the decade which ended with the Treaty of Versailles, the technical, structural and emotional foundation of the cinema was laid—which might be the only good thing ever to coincide with the Treaty of Versailles.

Some scholars believe that the early creative period of any new art form possesses the greatest creative impetus, and this is curiously true of the drama—the Shakespearean drama—and similarly true of the motion picture. If you wish to make a comparison, you can compare Mack Sennett to the type of buffoonery and light comedy of Ben Jonson; D. W. Griffith to the sensitive, human, and superb craftsmanship of Shakespeare, and Ince to the bawdy, tough, rough, humanistic Dekker. I do not advise categorical comparisons of that type, because they might be extended too far. But it is very good for historical comparison in helping us to understand the aesthetic background of a new art form.

Mack Sennett brought, also, something into American comedy to which we have a great debt, and which is particularly American, namely, the scoff, the ability to laugh at something very serious, to make fun of the great. For instance, in the days of the very popular Western films, he made a satire on westerns called *The Bitter Pill*, which kidded the Robert Taylor of that day—William S. Hart. I think there should be more American comedies today of this type. There could be an enormously funny comedy burlesque of *Gone With the Wind*—a very short skit. There could be a very amusing comedy burlesquing Robert Taylor, or Clark Gable. When the industry kids itself, it means the industry is young and growing. Now it is something else; too self-conscious, too rigid.

Mack Sennett is also important to us as the god-father of Charlie Chaplin. As a director he introduced Chaplin to the motion picture and taught him the importance of transferring his vaudeville style to the screen, which Chaplin did very easily. Pantomime was something in which he felt very much at home, in London. The sort of skits he did on the London stage were easily adapted to the screen. *The Boxing Lesson*, for in-

stance—you can imagine Chaplin doing a boxing lesson on the stage. Also, the famous stock one of the drunk going home at night. These were easily translated to the screen.

Sennett had taken up where Melies had left off in comedy. Where Sennett left off on the scoff, Chaplin took up. He extended burlesque into satire. His early pictures made fun of serious things, for the first time in American comedy. He made fun of the cops and of such important and serious institutions and people as honeymooners, the opera, pillars of society, and others who are deemed important and pompous. As his satire deepened he also took on the social tone which today characterizes him as perhaps the most powerful international voice on human relations that we have on the screen. An early picture, *The Immigrant*, showed the Statue of Liberty above, and below, a group of immigrants in the steerage of the boat, being handled like cattle. *The Gold Rush* was a thesis to the effect that all that is gold does not glitter, and that wealth is an illusion. Another early picture, *The Kid*, had a very social title in the beginning—*Her Only Sin Was Motherhood*, which, when flashed on the screen, brought a laugh with its biting significance.

To get back to the famous triangle. Ince was a man who started off with wild and woolly western serials. You might say that he brought the saloon into parlor consciousness. He threw in a spittoon for good measure, and he was not afraid to be tough and rough and realistic. He made the 101 Ranch of the wild west a famous ranch. You might even say he placed it, historically speaking, in a niche beside the Round Table of King Arthur. He inaugurated the whole cycle of western and gangster pictures. He, too, had a social perspective, and made some very significant pictures about the slums, poverty, social conditions, the problems of the emigré—the last entitled *The Italian*.

To round out this trio there is, of course, the great man of the screen who still is great: D. W. Griffith. Just as Melies discovered a medium three minutes in length which he made into a whole reel of significance, so Griffith found the motion picture as an amusing sidelight to vaudeville acts. The motion

(Continued on page 22)

Filming a European Crisis

By HANS BURGER

Mr. Burger, who gave the following address at the Annual Conference, was co-director of the film "Crisis", which was selected as one of the Ten Best of 1939 by the National Board.

WHEN you open your newspaper today you usually find a small note at the head of the page warning you that foreign news is subject to censorship. In addition to this, every modern reader has a kind of censorship of his own. He always has some idea of the kind of paper he is reading; he knows something about its background and, very often, something about the background of certain of the reporters. If, for instance, the organ of the German-American Bund writes about a decisive victory of the German army, with 23 French divisions smashed and a hundred British planes shot down, then almost automatically the reader plugs in a kind of filter, an inner censorship, and reminds himself that the printing press is really a very patient animal!

It is very different, however, when you see pictures, newsreels and documentaries. For some strange reason everything you see has more authentic value for you than what you read in print. Maybe our use of language is partly to blame. Some fifty years ago a scientist got the unhappy idea of calling his system of photographic lenses an "Objective", and at once people began to confuse a camera-objective with the idea of impartiality—which is a very loose translation of the word.

This happened long before Mr. Arthur Mayer came to us and gave us money, a camera and film and, as an objective, the filming of the Czechoslovakian crisis. But a year later, when we tried to get the finished picture distributed, the representative of one of the biggest film companies simply said to me: "Not a chance! What d'you think you've done? This isn't art! You just went

out and filmed what you saw and then spliced it together. . . ." Well, it is true we filmed what we saw. We were very honest about that. There is not a single shot in the picture *Crisis* that we didn't make ourselves—with the exception of the ones of Munich and Berchtesgaden. There are no stock-shots. Everything is pure, unadulterated reality, just as we saw it.

Yet this reality, when investigated a little more carefully, turns out to be the most complicated thing in the world, and perhaps you will see why if I give you an example.

Let us suppose there is a big subway crash somewhere in Queens. Five newsreel companies rush their cameramen to the scene, five cameras work feverishly at the same place, with the same "objective", even with the same type of camera. And the result? Five different pictures. Not, astonishingly enough, because each of the cameras had to be set up in a slightly different position. These pictures turn out to be fundamentally different; they even contradict each other sometimes. Let us try and discover why.

Let us presume that one of the cameramen is an optimist who thinks mankind is essentially good. What will his picture show? Probably passengers and by-standers participating feverishly in rescue work and touching scenes of courageous people helping others out of the jammed cars. And you sit in the audience and marvel at the virtues of the human race.

But the second cameraman is a born sceptic. He thinks mankind isn't worth a cent and will prove his point by shooting faces which seem to be completely phlegmatic, or even smiling. He will show suffering people, and others who just don't care. And you sit in the audience and remind yourself that in life everyone thinks of his own safety first.

The third cameraman is a special case. His

company is affiliated with the insurance company that holds a policy on the subway. I won't say that his employers tell him what to film. But, even unconsciously, he cannot help knowing where his weekly pay-check comes from. On top of that he has an editor to check his pictures afterwards. So, as you watch his pictures unroll you are impressed by the fact that the subway management apparently neglected nothing which could have secured the life and health of their passengers.

I think my point is clear enough without our going into the frailties of the remaining two cameramen. We can see that all the photographers were "objective", that all their pictures were "authentic", and that the camera cannot lie.

Yet what is the truth? You can't be in every subway crash in order to check up on it yourself. And if the subway crash happens to be something worse, and if it doesn't happen in Queens but thousands of miles away—then the possibility of the pictures being lies grows with the square of the mileage.

As I have said, the public is experienced in reading newspapers. Most people allow for exaggeration and the laws of probability. But faced by a documentary film, a collection of "authentic" pictures, they lose all their critical faculties.

* * *

Say somebody has filmed the very harmless scene of an apple being thrown towards an apple tree. The camera follows the apple up to the top of the tree. In editing the scene the throwing man is cut away, leaving the realistic picture of an apple flying up into the branches of a tree.

None will believe that this is the normal behavior of apples, no matter how honestly we swear to the authenticity of its flight! Nor will it bother us particularly to be doubted. But when our flying apple is considered in terms of world crisis, when you stand with a newsreel camera in a foreign land, these problems of veracity become questions of life and death and a grave responsibility. When we first came to North Bohemia (the section of Czechoslovakia for which the Nazis faked the name "Sudetenland") we fell into the hands of Nazi propa-

gandists. They were very clever people and if our camera crew had been composed only of Americans I give you my word that you would have seen apples flying through the air and never doubted them for an instant! They showed us an ironworks with deserted halls, black chimneys, rusted railway tracks. They showed us a town of seven thousand starving families, starving because the ironworks had shut down. They told us that this town of Rothau was once a prosperous town, but that the Czechs came and forced out the owner of the works, bringing starvation. But Hitler was going to put the people to work again when he came. . . .

We filmed this ironworks. We filmed the hungry children and the jobless men who were digging coal out of forgotten pits with their bare hands, hoping to sell it and make a few cents for their starving families. But what was the truth?

The owner of the ironworks was a good Nazi. He was also a member of a trust, along with a number of Czech ironmen. The trust figured that they must guard against over-production by closing down one of the works. They picked on Rothau. So our Nazi got three and a half million crowns in compensation, but he told his workers that the Czechs had squeezed him out. He still lives in a nice little palace in Vienna. . . .

This is the truth and consequently you will find this episode in our picture *Crisis* not among the arguments for the Nazi, but as one of the charges against their stupid chauvinism. We show the men, together with the Czech unemployed, peacefully digging their coals, and we show a 100% Czech organization bringing food and clothing to the starving children.

In every German village we were invited to the Nazi headquarters and shown documents and letters about the behavior of the Czechs. The officials were always sorry that we couldn't have come the day before—to see the Czech police beating them and their children. We used to race hundreds of miles to catch up with these beatings, but somehow there was always perfect peace when we arrived. The Czechs were suppressing all German national feelings, we were told; they refused to allow celebrations.

We spent fifty sleepless nights in fruitless efforts to catch up with the suppressions.

But one morning we didn't arrive too late. It was two days after the famous May mobilization of 1938. The country was full of soldiers, the frontier was occupied and the Reich newspapers printed full-page stories about the crimes of the Czech soldiery. Actually, two German spies had been shot while escaping across the border on motorcycles with important military documents. We were informed that they would have a funeral in Eger, a city five miles from the German border. We raced there at breath-taking speed and just managed to arrive in time. We saw—during a period of mobilization, don't forget!—how the Nazis were allowed to concentrate all their followers from hundreds of miles away in the city of Eger, to demonstrate against the country they were living in. The Nazi party had spent thousands of crowns to ensure a huge turn-out; they paid car-fares, crammed hundreds into cars and buses and threatened anybody who had more important things to do with a bloody revenge when Hitler came—which was supposed to be at any moment. This was the truth about the Czech suppression of German national feeling, and thus we filmed it.

One month later we filmed another concentration of Germans in the Sudetenland. This time the democratic Germans had been invited to a festival in Reichenberg, about ten miles from the frontier.

Here, too, were thousands of Germans. But nobody had paid their car-fare, nobody had requisitioned fancy cars for them; they came with their own money, on foot and by bicycle and farm-cart. None of their leaders checked up to see if they were all there. They demonstrated for freedom and democracy and thousands of Czechs came from Prague to tell them that they wouldn't desert them. And they didn't. Somebody else did. This was the truth, and we filmed it.

But if the democratic organizations didn't check up on their followers, the Nazis did. Hundreds of blacklists were found in the homes of Nazi leaders during the martial law period in September 1938. I remember that bombs, rifles and dynamite were found in the home of one group-leader. The Nazi

papers asked scornfully how any country that *was* a country could be threatened by a few rifles and bombs. But I don't have to tell you how real this threat was. We filmed it—not as an unusual apple that flew in the wrong direction, but as a fundamental characteristic of the Nazi movement which was of such importance that it must be recorded. Subsequent events proved our judgment right.

And the blacklists? They were shown to the British delegation, headed by Lord Runciman who spent all his week-ends in the castles of various Nazi-Junkers. He saw the lists, he saw that the Nazis openly threatened the lives of at least three hundred thousand democratic Germans and Czechs. Probably he assessed these figures cautiously, applying the laws of probability. He knew that Nazis rarely keep promises, but that there was one promise they probably always kept: the promise of bloody revenge. He knew it and his masters knew it too: they knew what they did when they gave up Czechoslovakia. . . . That was the truth, and we filmed it as far as we could.

We know that *Crisis* has many weaknesses. It couldn't be otherwise, for we were inside a country in which information of every kind, true and false, came to us every day. We couldn't be in more than one place at a time and I am sure we missed a lot. But what we wanted to get were not incidental shots of anything that happened. They might constitute "reality", but we wanted things which told the truth.

The making of films is very far developed. There are hundreds of great craftsmen and artists producing films. There are hundreds of great cameramen and editors available to do splendid jobs. We, the crew which made *Crisis*, are aware that we could have done our job better from a filmic point of view—that this or that shot was against the rules, that we could have returned with a far more beautiful picture full of castles, streams, forests, folk-dances and the very beautiful girls of my native country. But we are very proud to think that the National Board overlooked all these shortcomings and understood that it was a different message we wanted to bring you.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional and Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Pinocchio

Founded on Carl Collodi's story, produced by Walt Disney. Supervising directors Ben Sharpsteen, Hamilton Luske; sequence directors Bill Roberts, Norman Ferguson, Jack Kinney, Wilfred Jackson, T. Hee; Animation directors, Fred Moore, Milton Kahl, Ward Kimball, Eric Larson, Frankling Thomas, Vladimir Tytla, Arthur Babbitt, Woolie Reitherman; music and lyrics, Leigh Harline, New Washington, Paul J. Smith. Produced and distributed by RKO-Radio.

“CARTOON,” even “animated cartoon,” doesn’t convey any longer what Walt Disney does, it hasn’t for a long time. Otis Ferguson, looking for a word for *Pinocchio*, had to fall back on calling it a “Disney,” which of course is condensing into a noun what everybody has in mind when he thinks of a Disney film, in fact what a lot of people have been doing. Maybe it is the inevitable unique word for a unique thing.

Pinocchio goes far beyond anything Disney and his studio have done before. The difference is a tremendous advance partly in the technique of animation, and even more remarkably—whether significantly or not—in a change toward what might be called a romantic kind of naturalism. The drawings are far removed from the broad and simple and humorous lines of the early Mickeys and Silly Symphonies, for which the word “cartoon” could be aptly used, and have become more and more the careful, serious kind of picture you find in pretty paintings. Look at the landscapes, the sea, the fairy: could Edmond Dulac have done anything in which

fancy and fantasy were more governed by prettiness?

To some people the first sight of *Pinocchio* gives something of the same kind of shock—the shock of difference—that one might feel if confronted, without any period of adjustment, by an immediate change from silent films (the best ones) to talkies (also the best ones). It isn’t merely that there is a great amount of dialogue, an almost inordinate amount, in *Pinocchio*. The whole style and approach seem to have changed, just as comic strips have changed from being just comic slapstick to narratives of adventure or romance. And once more you are confronted with the question of whether change is necessarily progress. Or is it a matter of taste?

Comparing *Pinocchio* with *Snow White* is inevitable: there is nothing else to compare it with. *Snow White* is so old it is ageless, and all her adventures are a part of racial memory, happenings we instinctively understand without needing to adjust ourselves to them at all. *Pinocchio* is foreign and strange, localized in Italian tradition and (though that makes little difference) pretty modern as folk-lore goes. *Snow White* makes an immense appeal to the sympathies: who cares whether a puppet becomes a real boy or not? *Snow White* is a simple tale of goodness rewarded and wickedness punished, with no explicit moral: *Pinocchio* is as full of morals, carefully emphasized, as a Sunday school story.

These comparisons are apt to crop up forcibly at the first sight of *Pinocchio*. But at the second sight they are forgotten, and you can give yourself up to the extraordinary

movement and skill of it. The animation has become something little short of magic. The details—such details as the clock figures, the dancing puppets, the under-sea adventures with all their marine creatures, are superb examples of the Disney tradition brought to perfection. The non-human characters are delightful: Jiminy Cricket, the amiable satires implicit in Cleo the goldfish and J. Worthington Foulfellow the foxy ham adventurer, the cat, the terrifying whale.

In technique it is hard to imagine how Disney can go further, though it is one of the qualities of genius that it can go beyond the common imagination. But there is many an admirer of his who wishes he would leave human characters to human actors, and give us more animals and bugs and flowers and fish. What he could do with "The Wind in the Willows!"

J. H. S.

(Rated Exceptional)

The Fight for Life

U. S. Film Service release of Pare Lorentz production; written and directed by Pare Lorentz. Adapted from Paul de Kruif's book, "The Fight for Life"; score, Louis Gruenberg; camera, Floyd Crosby.

The Cast

Interne	Myron McCormack
Dr. Ballou	Storrs Haynes
Dr. Hanson	Will Geer
Head Doctor	Dudley Digges
Young Woman	Dorothy Adams
Grandmother	Doroth Urban
Receptionist	Effie Anderson

PARE LORENTZ'S *The Fight For Life* is the first feature-length documentary film to be released to the American public in recent years, and is therefore of great importance not only to the career of this talented director but also in the development of the documentary film in this country. Not that the success of *The*



Motherhood is the theme of Pare Lorentz's documentary film, "The Fight for Life"

Fight For Life would cause mass production of a kind of film which has thrived on independence, poverty, and careful workmanship. Nor would the failure of the new picture dissuade workers in the field from continuing their courageous effort to dramatize the world we live in. The documentary film movement has already developed too far to be much affected by the fate of a single film. Nevertheless, much can be learned from analyzing this unusual picture. Because of its length, its ambitions, and the importance of its director, it can be thought of as a sort of test case, a way of finding out whether or not the method followed here is an appropriate way for the documentary film to realize its peculiar aims.

Because they serve a special purpose, documentary films must be judged by special standards. Their first aim is to interest the public in civic problems, to arouse in each citizen a sense of his vital stake in public affairs. Beyond this general aim, each individual film has a specific cause to promote. Lastly and basically, the documentaries, like every other form of film, must entertain the public to which they are directed. The extent to which any individual picture fulfills these three aims is not only a measure of its excellence. It is also an indication of the ideas of the man who made it, a key to his understanding of the function of the documentary film.

No one has ever criticized Lorentz's first two films, *The Plow That Broke The Plains* and *The River* on the ground that they were dull. To hundreds of startled audience-groups, they were the most unexpectedly exciting pictures of recent years. They "entertained" the spectator by making him a participant in what the film was about. By the use of familiar music, place names, and the American landscape itself, the memories and associations of audiences were stimulated toward identification with the people who faced the problems of erosion and flood control. The weak spot in both pictures was the fact that there really were very few people in them. Perhaps to fill this lack, Lorentz's new film is built round people almost entirely. And in order to focus sympathy and interest even more, the people are also professional actors, skilled in the elo-

quent expression of emotions which you and I ordinarily hide and only betray at moments when we are far from cameras and microphones. Their dramatic appeal is further heightened by the fact that they are placed in an elementary situation which tears at our emotions whether we like it or not. For *The Fight for Life* is the fight of doctors and nurses and internes to save mothers and unborn children from the disease-breeding filth of the slums. Because this fight takes place amidst the formidable paraphernalia of hospitals or in the sinister shadows of slum dwellings, and above all because the medical routine depicted is in its every detail a race against time, it cannot help but be exciting. It is sometimes tragic as well, and curiously it is always hopeful. Because of this, because our emotions are enlisted, *The Fight For Life* is certainly an entertaining film. The question remains, however, whether in achieving entertainment Mr. Lorentz has not sacrificed those other, more important, goals at which the documentary film aims.

The effort to enlist public interest in public problems must be more than the formal goal of the director of a documentary film. It must inform his whole approach, be made manifest in each step in the creation of his film. And if public interest is to be enlisted to any purpose, audiences must be made to feel that what the film is about is real. Mr. Lorentz's treatment of his problem here, so successful in eliciting emotion, does not seem to me to make the problem real at all. His actors emote skilfully, his ambulance sirens shriek terrifyingly, the oxygen bag on the operating table pulsates, wavers, resumes feebly. But Hollywood has accustomed us to this sort of thing, and we are inclined to look upon it as a trick used to get us excited rather than a real occurrence. We may even feel the urge to burlesque the solemnity of the medicos and the excitement of the telephone operator as she receives and distributes her news of life and death. Maybe we would have believed it more if the doctors had been real doctors and the telephone girl the one who ignores you for five minutes while you fidget around the lobby. It is all a little too slick, and somehow suggests that what we are seeing is a special case instead

of the sort of reality we are likely to run into tomorrow or the next day.

Perhaps the film in general doesn't feel very real because its specific purpose isn't as clear as it might be. In fact, I am not at all sure that what I got out of the picture is what Mr. Lorentz put in it. If I take him rightly, the author-director intended to show how great is the skill and how persistent the courage and devotion of the medical profession. That comes through, though, as I said, it seemed less important than it might have because it is expressed in Hollywood terms. But right in the middle of his picture, Mr. Lorentz includes a sequence—strikingly fine in itself—which makes the statement that a doctor's skill and courage and devotion are powerless to heal when they are opposed by poverty. This, I take it, is the actual theme of the picture, but it is articulated only once, and then as an interruption, for after the sequence is over the film goes on showing skill and courage and devotion over and over again and ends monotonously on the same note. The result is rather abstract and remote, a generalization which one recognizes as true but which offers no springboard for action.

In short, the tendency of *The Fight For Life* is on the whole away from the present methods of the documentary film. Mr. Lorentz seems to be going in the direction of such symbolic fictionalizations of fact as *The Grapes of Wrath*, rather than following the down-to-brass-tacks gambit of most documentaries, which are interested in facing up to a problem that has a local habitation and a name—and has, moreover, a tangible and possible solution. I rather doubt that the director intended to make this effect; he seems to have done it as an expedient to keep interest alive throughout a full-length film. And that he *does* succeed in doing, precisely in terms of the thinking of the largest film audience. There, possibly, is the justification for his method, or at least an explanation of it. Mr. Lorentz fictionizes and romanticizes real problems, but so do the people he is addressing. Actually his viewpoint represents very accurately the social conscience of the average moviegoer in its present phase of development. Many American documentaries have been more conscien-

tious, specific, and practical than *The Fight For Life*. But the very confusion of this picture is akin to the attitude of the great audience, which has become conscious of basic social problems only in recent years, is still unaccustomed to carrying them in its mind, and hasn't the faintest idea of what to do about them. Because he feels with people like this, Mr. Lorentz is able to keep their interest alive, and sometimes he does it masterfully well. The key sequence in the film, when the camera backs away from a doctor who has just delivered a slum baby to the slums themselves, and travels through miles and miles of desolate streets where every child is constantly endangered by things from which medical science can't protect him, is searchingly bitter and tragic. Perhaps Mr. Lorentz will next time be able to build his film round such an idea, instead of grafting it artificially into the middle. Perhaps he will be able, temperamentally as well as intellectually, to show us that social problems are real and have real solutions. Whether he does or not, there will be many films to tackle this job, and meanwhile we must thank him for one which lays the groundwork surpassingly well.

(Rated Exceptional)

R. G.

Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet

Screen play by John Huston, Heinz Herald and Norman Burnside from an idea by Norman Burnside, directed by William Dieterle, photographed by James Wong Howe, executive producer Hal B. Wallis, associate producer Wolfgang Rheinhold. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

Dr. Paul Ehrlich.....	Edward G. Robinson
Mrs. Ehrlich	Ruth Gordon
Dr. Emil von Behring.....	Otto Kruger
Dr. Robert Koch.....	Albert Basserman
Minister Althoff	Donald Crisp
Franziska Speyer.....	Maria Ouspenskaya
Professor Hartmann	Montague Love
Dr. Hans Wolfert.....	Sig Rumann
Dr. Lenz	Henry O'Neill
Dr. Morgenroth	Edward Norris
Dr. Kraus.....	Theodore von Eltz
Dr. Kinze.....	Louis Jean Heydt
Dr. Brockdorf	Louis Calhern



Dr. Ehrlich explains his problem to his co-workers

IN these latter years, especially in the last two, there appears to have been more serious reading and listening going on than a while back. More non-fiction books, more informational radio programs. More people seem to be more seriously curious, and serious curiosity can lead anywhere. The same sort of thing has been happening with the movies: since things can't be turned away from, but keep popping into the news, over the air, from all sort of places, why not face them and look at them? Looking at them may mean looking into them, which may turn out to be interesting.

Dr. Ehrlich and his experiments with chemicals to kill disease germs isn't what would have been thought good movie fare not so long ago. It's in a direct line from "Pasteur," following closely that successful pattern of a scientist fighting his slow and lonely fight against ignorance and conservatism and red tape. The fearful shock that might have been expected from hearing the word "syphilis" on the screen is not very

shattering: the whole thing has been handled with too much sincerity and dignity and good taste to be sensational, and the discovery of Paul Ehrlich's 606 is only one, though the crowning one, of a remarkable series of invaluable successful researches.

It is its fact and documentation that give this film its fascination, and the spirit in which the facts are presented. So far as dramatic plot is concerned this sort of thing has become a Pasteurized formula, the kind closely identified with Paul Muni, from beards and sympathetic helpmates and unsympathetic colleagues to court-room scenes and final appeals for understanding and tolerance. For movie audiences this seems to be a safe and excellent formula, and never before, in pictures made for popular interest, has the camera been used so craftily to take the spectator into the heart of what he is watching. Where, save through projection on a screen, could an audience look through a microscope and watch live germs, in this instance vivified by color, or see through the

eyes of a blind man how, as his vision came back to normal, objects gradually emerged from darkness to haziness to distinct outline, and experience subjectively the restoration of sight? In addition to these special cinematic devices, the tale of Dr. Ehrlich's long years of research has been told with remarkable clarity and remarkably little theatrical jockeying, from his first experiments with dyes and his discovery of how to bring the tubercle bacillus into the field of microscopic vision, through his successful improvement of diphtheria serum, to his great battle to convince the medical world that disease could be cured with chemicals. It sounds text-bookish and dry, but they have presented it in human terms that give it vivid human interest.

The human interest comes a great deal from warmly expert characterizations. Above all Edward G. Robinson, who in this film escapes at last from his long years of type-casting in criminal roles into an heroic embodiment of beneficence. In a beard that is a triumph of the make-up master's art, and with a voice that is infinitely remote from *Little Caesar*, he gives the most admirable performance of his screen career. Albert Basserman and Otto Kruger and Ruth Gordon lead a good supporting cast, in which the only jarring note to be found is the remarkable diversity of broken English spoken by some of them. William Dieterle's direction and James Wong Howe's photography handle the actors and the settings and properties with revealing sympathy and skill.

Movies about doctors must be popular or there wouldn't be so many of them. One of the best of the fiction type is still *Arrow-smith*, and from that they have gone on to *The Citadel* and the Dr. Kildare series, which is the medical counterpart of the Jones family. *Dr. Ehrlich* (the *Magic Bullet* seems to be a box-office device to bridge the gulf between Mr. Robinson as a gangster and Mr. Robinson as an actually great scientist) is the best of the American films to get away from fiction, while still retaining its form, and attempt to satisfy this popular curiosity with facts. If it is part of a trend, it is an interesting trend to watch.

J. S. H.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

The Human Beast

(La Bete Humaine)

Released by Juno Films Inc. Directed by Jean Renoir; from the novel by Emile Zola. Photography by Curt. Courant.

Jacques Lantier	Jean Gabin
Severine Roubaud	Simone Simon
Roubaud	Ledoux
Pequez	Carette
Cabuche	Jean Renoir
Flore	Blanchette Brunoy
Fils Davergne	Gerand Landry
Philomene	Jenny Helia
Mme. Victoire	Colette Regis
Mme. Misard	Germaine Clasis
Grandmorin	Berlois
Examining Magistrate	Andre Tavenier
Canche	Roussel
Employee	Perez

JEAN RENOIR has run the gamut in his choice of material for films; his subjects have included such dissimilar themes as the French Revolution, life in a flop-house, and the rigors of a prison-camp in wartime. In essence, however, his films have much in common; through them all run the tradition of French naturalism and a love of characteristic depiction of the French working man. So it is hardly surprising that his latest film should be drawn from Zola's huge work on the Rougon-Macquart family, and that the central figure should be a simple engineer, set against a background of steel tracks, locomotives, smoke, and thunder.

Any film that depicts with passable skill the mechanics of a trade, is likely to be interesting, especially to the more sedentary and intellectual movie-goer whose knowledge of mechanisms is usually nil. The half-childish desire for flashing pistons and spinning wheels, which is in most of us, is given many minutes of sweet satisfaction in *The Human Beast*, creating a pleasure that often thrusts the more serious elements of the film into the background, or covers up even the more serious flaws by the prevalence of its dash and exhilaration.

Not that either Zola or Renoir meant the story of *The Human Beast* to be an affair of delightful puff-puffs, for the satisfaction of our childish emotions. The engineer in



*Jean
Gabin
and
Simone
Simon
in
"La Bête
Humaine"*

question is Jacques Lantier — the half-brother of that far more famous character, Nana—and on him falls the burden of drunken living which has killed his forebears and been transmitted to him in the form of acute homicidal mania. Now human, now beast—we see him in both configurations; normally a strong, good-hearted personality, abnormally a raging murderer whose only respite from mental torture is found at the throttle of his big locomotive, tearing down the express run between Paris and Le Havre.

His end is determined, however, by the wife of his own station-master. Simone Simon, who plays this part, is a speaking embodiment of the old French tradition which believes every station-master's wife to be fluffy-minded and entirely unfaithful. Her husband, fierce and jealous, (Renoir usually has him embrace his young wife with his

back to the camera, showing up his bald crown) disposes of her first lover by stabbing him to death in the train, forcing her to look on while he does so. The engineer, returning from his run as a passenger, is a suspected witness to the crime, and it is to silence him that the wife first begins to make herself attractive to him, finally deepening their relationship into adultery, and even trying to force him into murdering her impossible husband. But, with poetic justice, it is she who pays the penalty, meeting her death at the hands of her lover in one of his moments of insanity. To complete the cycle of human destruction, the engineer throws himself from the cab of his engine and brings to an end a triangle of intense violence and passion.

Unquestionably the most dramatic and effective power of the film lies in the relation between the human personalities and the

daily workings of a huge terminus. At no times does Renoir permit the action to go beyond the confines of steel rails, mechanisms, and the men who look after them: even the interlude of the dance, in which a tenor unwittingly sings his song from "Mignon" as a requiem for the murdered wife, is shown essentially as a projection of the life of the railroads. The passions and conflicts flourish in the drab little homes of the station employees, or emerge from a confusion of forgotten freight cars and engine sheds, dimly lit by station lanterns. When the violence and agitation of the characters runs high, it is picked up by the roar of the speeding trains, with Renoir using his sound effects as they have rarely been used before—making them intrinsic not only with the visual sequences, but with the whole mood and tempo of his characters' thoughts and actions, until the sound ceases to be anything but a means of illustration and story-telling.

The only uncertainty the audience is likely to feel is connected with the film's clarity as a communication. This may be found a serious problem. Neither the characterizations nor the aim of the film are clear cut; there are moments, indeed, when one's pleasure in its vital atmosphere is checked suddenly by the feeling that one is without a compass. This is partly because there is no special emphasis on a single theme—is it the lives of trainmen, the life of a semi-insane individual, the effects of bitter circumstances in childhood? We are not told very clearly, though it seems probable that Zola's theme of hereditary suffering is meant to apply to more than one of the characters. But where Zola spun his tale of family tragedy in twenty volumes, Renoir has but an hour and a half of pictures to portray a single one of the twenty; and thus we are dropped into a world for which we are unprepared, and ripe for confusion in interpreting it. No blame can be laid upon the actors; they strive with remarkable success to clarify their blurred portraits, and this is specially true of Simone Simon (whose playing will be a revelation to those who have seen only her Hollywood productions) and Ledoux, as her husband. As for Jean Gabin, the engineer, it is rare to find him falling short in any respect.

"Give me Gabin and a few express trains" said one critic, "and what else can I ask for?" N. D.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

The Baker's Wife

(La Femme du Boulanger)

A Marcel Pagnol Production, based on an incident in a novel by Jean Giono. Directed by Marcel Pagnol. Adaptation and dialogue, Marcel Pagnol. Photographed by G. Benoit, R. Ledru, and N. Daries. Music by Vincent Scotto. English titles by John Erskine. Distributed in the United States by "The Baker's Wife, Inc."

The Cast

<i>The Baker</i>	Raimu
<i>The Baker's Wife</i>	Ginette Leclerc
<i>The Handsome Shepherd</i>	Charles Moulin
<i>The Priest</i>	Robert Vattier
<i>The School Teach</i>	Robert Bassac
<i>The Marquis</i>	Charpin

ALL the Frenchman's love of native scene and type has gone into the making of *The Baker's Wife*. The same affection with which Rene Clair produces his Parisian street scenes recreates this village in Provence, favorite locale of Jean Giono and Marcel Pagnol, the writer-director combination which also produced *Harvest*. As in that famous film, the ancient town, the doorways, the streets, the brief shots of the beautiful countryside, a grove of olive trees, the silhouette of a little hill, all these details of background are reproduced *con amore*. The tale which adorns and brings the town to life is also told with delight in the creation of character and type. It is the story of a baker whose beautiful wife runs off with the Marquis's shepherd. In the interval of three days and nights during which the unfaithful girl is absent, the baker is made the butt—and the darling—of the village. The townspeople follow him about. They watch him drowning his sorrows in drink. They even present the poor fellow with a magnificent pair of antlers! The local



The townsmen try to get the baker back to his baking

types—a priest, a school teacher, the Marquis—are skillfully played off against each other, each mixing gaily in the scandalous situation. The village lives. Finally, in a very broad and witty sequence, the adulteress is discovered by the priest and the school teacher. She comes home repentant and humiliated and finds the baker ready, with a touching and ludicrous eagerness, to give her back her self-esteem. He not only forgives her—he raises her to a new level of virtue and wifely perfection. The film ends with a happy baker returning to his oven to give the villagers “bread the like of which you have never before seen.”

The baker is played by Raimu, whose particular brilliance lies in his ability to keep the part moving from the pitiful to the ridiculous. In his deep sense of the relationship between pathos and humor, he reminds you

of Charlie Chaplin—but only in that sense. For Raimu’s acting is wholly French, and the picture itself could have been made nowhere else in the world but in the Gallic studios. The source of its comedy is not the idea of adultery as such, but the fact that the baker is so unmanned by the loss of his wife that he can’t make any bread. That is a serious matter for the whole village, and that is why its inhabitants are so concerned. A man’s private life is his own affair and that of the gossips, but when it interferes with public service it becomes a part of the public domain. Nobody is more serious about these matters than the French, and with all its Rabelaisian atmosphere *The Baker’s Wife* is really a virtuous film. Its sauce is scandalous, but underneath is very solid meat indeed.

M. B. M.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

Book Reviews

Hollywood Saga. By William C. deMille. Dutton \$3.50.

MR. DEMILLE'S *Saga* isn't an analysis of the motion picture from the first faint flicker to *Gone With the Wind* or an epic of Hollywood's progress from almost a cow-path to a modern Arabian Nights, and it is only relatively biographical. Rather, it culls a little from each and is primarily the reminiscences of a few pioneers from the autumn day in 1913 when Cecil B. deMille, Jesse Lasky and the last twenty thousand dollars in the world went West to make *The Squaw Man* in an open barn, to the cataclysm of the sound film which literally uprooted the whole industry in the manner of one of C. B.'s biblical visitations.

Of *The Squaw Man*, the author says: "... the story held; it was essentially drama, the acting restrained and realistic, the emotional climaxes poignant . . . never before had a motion picture affected me as a depiction of real people with genuine emotions . . . dimly, I began to see the screen's possibilities as a new social force, a new medium of broader appeal than any yet devised; a new way of revealing the peoples of the world to one another, not as Americans, Germans or Japanese, but as mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, lovers. . . ."

He dallies engagingly over the first few pioneer years and then jumps a decade to the momentous birth of the babbling babe. What the deMilles have done since then is barely hinted, and the gaps between the two points are filled for the most part with highly interesting and amusing anecdotes of their studios at different times, and an occasional glimpse of the rest of the Hollywood of yesterday: How quiet little Adolph Zukor defeated the one-reel chain that threatened to nip the feature film in the bud, joined Lasky and the deMilles and the Paramount Distributing organization to assure them a distribution outlet and form the nucleus of the powerful Paramount of today; C. B.'s introduction of the sophisticated glamour film and its immediate effect on clothing and even bathroom style (C. B., if for nothing else will go down in History as the Emancipator of the Bathroom), his later preoccupation with

Biblical spectacle, the author's turning from writing to direction, and the obstacles he encountered.

The highlights are all too briefly sprinkled with flashes of beloved faces; superimposed montages that vanish before Memory is fully awakened; some that have faded away, others that died: 'Jerry' Farrar, a grand person and splendid trouper who didn't need her great voice to be loved by fellow-workers and public: she it was who inaugurated the famous Hollywood party; Lois Wilson and Florence Vidor, whose shy reserve all but cost them their careers; Mary Pickford, whose beauty and charm were surpassed only by a mathematical mind insistent upon higher figures than the Paramount comptometers could supply; Thomas Meighan, in *Male and Female*, doing a desert island scene with a live and lusty leopard draped around his neck; Theodore Roberts and James Neill, in Biblical array, left standing outside the portals of C. B.'s inner sanctum over an hour, and finally sending in the message: "Just say that Moses and Aaron are waiting to see God."

Sometimes the author indulges in remembrances that might well be supplanted by others equally close to mind and more to the point, but these do not obscure his natural modesty and charming style. Much that is invaluable to writer, director and actor is discussed, and the ill-matched blending of stage and screen in 1928 is thoroughly analyzed and a solution, then, now and for the future of the talking screen, carefully suggested. Mr. deMille feels that any industry that can weather sudden death and complete rebirth in a short six months, as the film did then, can accomplish virtually the impossible; he sees in it the Will of the People behind the camera, ceaselessly selecting and rejecting, and they can do no wrong because theirs is the first, last and only Court of Appeals. This I consider a decidedly debatable point, but this is no debate.

Hollywood Saga is bound to evoke pleasant, nostalgic memories for those who love the movies just for themselves and not alone for what social significance they can impart. Perhaps you'll agree with the author that, with the present factory methods and multiple collaborations in all departments, some of

the thrill, the color and romance that came with the pioneers left when they went, too. But where is William deMille now? He is a fine writer and playwright; he always was a good director—and today as much as yesterday the combination is as rare as it is essential; and he believes that

the highest function of motion-picture art is to express the people to themselves. The voice of the screen is the voice of common humanity trying to put into living words its thoughts and emotions, its ideals and its dreams.

The man who says this and can do it has a duty to perform.

J. A. McA.

Memo on the Movies: War Propaganda, 1914-1939. By Winifred Johnston. Published by Cooperative Books, Series I, Number 5, Norman, Oklahoma.

THE title of this pamphlet is too modest altogether. Winifred Johnston's analysis of war propaganda in the movies is much more than a "memo." It is a close-packed collection of facts, aiming to show two things: how powerful the movies can be in creating opinion favorable to war, and who is interested in creating this opinion. As such, it should be of maximum interest to everybody who wants to know what the movies are really about and what effects they have beyond passing entertainment.

The author points out that films about war belong to three groups, which usually develop one into another as world crises intensify. The first group contents itself with depicting war itself as "decisive, romantic, heroic." The second, later, group, then begins to depict one side of the hypothetical or imminently forthcoming conflict as "good, brave, a force for righteousness." And finally, when the nations are already on the road to war, the third group appears, showing the "other" side as "brutal, depraved, lacking in abilities, decencies, and charm, a force for evil and barbarism." The users of this method of creating war propaganda are, according to Miss Johnston, the financial powers who control the movie industry. And these powers are not the producers, as most people would be likely to assume, but the financiers and banking institutions which own controlling interests in

the studios and can direct their policies at will.

Having assumed this as the essential set-up of the movie industry, Miss Johnston goes on to describe how the financiers have used the movie to propagandize their own commercial and industrial interests throughout the world, wherever these interests are aided or obstructed by war and nationalism. Her exposition of the use of propaganda films in the World War of 1914 is most informative. She herself was an employee of the government during the War, and, between facts cited from personal experience and an exceptionally intelligent use of the research done by other movie historians, she makes a convincing picture of the deliberate exploitation of the sentiments and loyalties of movie audiences during that period. The second part of her pamphlet, outlining the growing use of movies for war propaganda during the past thirteen years, is open to question. Perhaps her analysis here is less convincing because the facts are hard to find. Certainly she has made factual errors, particularly in her treatment of the development of the German film industry and its suppositious use, before 1933, for Nazi propaganda. But I think there is a deeper reason why Miss Johnston fails to make her interpretation wholly believable. Many writers have tried to show how the movies serve the personal interests of their owners, and most of them have succeeded in revealing a remarkable correspondence between the changing fortunes of the owners and the content of films at any given time. But no one has yet succeeded in showing just *how*—by what process—these persuasions are inserted into ordinary entertainment films, much less how audiences are induced to accept them. Like others before her, Miss Johnston evades the issue by assuming that the audience is completely passive, swallowing anything that is offered to it under the hypnotic spell of entertainment. I do not think anyone has the right to assume this, because the evidence on what audiences will or will not accept is still so vague as to be susceptible of contradictory interpretations. The question must be set down as an unsolved problem of movie research, and Miss Johnston's pamphlet, for all its vitality and

factuality, is no contribution toward its solution. It is nevertheless a valuable book, and I think it should be particularly useful to the casual movie-goer. He may not be convinced by all he reads in it, but he will never again see a movie without realizing that there is more to its story content than the advertisements tell. R. G.

Children in the Cinema. By Richard Ford. 230 pages. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

CHILDREN in the cinema being a subject of especial interest to the many active in community motion picture groups, when a book on it appears it is certain to receive attention. This book, although it is written from experiences in England, covers situations which are familiar to us here, and thus it makes good reading for those in this country. And then, too, even if the circumstances are not parallel it is of interest to know what other countries are doing in an active way about the motion picture and the child.

Mr. Ford is well able to write from experience, for he is chairman of, and has full responsibility for, the organization which plans and directs all the children's matinees in the Odeon Theatre circuit in London. This means 150 matinees, with an attendance of 100,000 children. He has brought to this work a background of education at Wellington College, and Trinity College, Cambridge, and training in political and economic research, and in the collection of population and social data.

The first of the nine chapters making up his book deals with "The Social Problem created by Children in the Cinema." Other chapters of special interest are "Psychological and Physical Aspects" and "Films the Children Like." When, in discussing the latter, the author says "there is one word that crystallizes the essentials of a film that is popular with children—action," he is in agreement with results proved by the study of film preferences among the Young Reviewers of the National Board. The children, we know, want something to happen: to them continued dialogue is tiresome.

What types of films are most popular? was a question put to 142 managers having children's matinees. Their replies summed up

as follows: Western, Adventure (not Western), Animal, Comedy, Historical, Musical, and Child Stars. Mr. Ford believes this first place for Westerns is because of their ingredients of "action, aggression, and the success of right over wrong," which children favor. The children's preference in shorts is also noted, and a judgment in accord with American children is shown when over 80% of the matinee managers state the cartoon character liked best is Mickey Mouse.

The chapter on organizations of children matinees, while not in all ways appropriate to situations here, shows enough of like problems to be of interest to those who have sponsored junior matinees, or wondered why they have failed to do so successfully. Many of these matinees, although they are planned for pure entertainment, manage to have "certain subjects suitable for child instruction wrapped inside entertainment." The most important of these subjects is safety; others are health, thrift, and the treatment of animals.

Mr. Ford expresses some doubt as to the general acceptance of film appreciation courses in the English schools, but suggests some ways in which the reason for opposition to them might be overcome.

If you want to compare problems, possibilities and plans in regard to motion pictures and children in England with conditions as you know them here, this book will help you do it. The agent for the United States is William Salloch, 725 Greenwich St., New York City. Price of book \$2.00.

B. G.

Cartoon Production. By Harold Turney.

THIS book is the first in a proposed series of Film Guide's Handbooks designed to interpret the various and numerous phases of motion picture production, distribution, and exhibition.

With the success of the feature length cartoon—*Pinocchio*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*—added to the long interest in animated shorts, this little book answering the question, How are cartoons made? is likely to find a hearty reception. Its developed outline style makes it an easily usable textbook in the study of cartoons, but does not prevent it from being interesting simply as reading. The sixty

pages of text include: Story Selection and Construction; Directors; Animation Recording; Photography; Technicolor; By-Products of Cartoons; Amateur Cartoon Production; History of Animated Cartoons; Walt Disney and other Contemporary Cartoonists. There is a thirty page pictorial section and you may also find Mickey Mouse, one of the Little Pigs, or Donald Duck, at any place throughout the book to remind you of your cartoon favorites as you read about them and how they came to be.

This Film Guide's Handbook is included in the regular annual Film Guide subscription: \$2.00 for twenty issues, or single copies are 40 cents. Write Film Guide, Taft Building, Hollywood, Calif. Those who have used Professor Turney's Guides on specific pictures in their film study will be glad to know that these Handbooks are to be added to the service.

Movie Opinions Aired

"YOUTH Goes to the Movies" was the subject of a broadcast in the series "Let's Face It Together," conducted by Youthbuilders, Inc., on radio station WNYC in New York.

This was shortly after the Conference of the National Board of Review and two conference delegates staying over took part as guests. Mrs. Frank R. Anderson, President of the Cleveland Cinema Club, told of the various youth activities in their Club and Mrs. Samuel B. Cuthbert described junior matinees as conducted in Pittsburgh by the Motion Picture Committee of the Allegheny County Federation of Women's Clubs.

But as usual on this series of programs given over to youth expression, adults were only incidental and the main discussion was conducted by three 13-year-olds. They commented on the points brought out by the guest speakers, showing a constructive interest in programs intended to develop in children a critical appreciation of motion pictures.

A later program in this series was also devoted to the motion picture. After a review of *The Bill of Rights* and *The Monroe Doctrine*, two films in the Warner Bros. Living American History series of shorts,

three youths from the Forum groups discussed the films in a broadcast, unrehearsed, as are all in this series. Particularly interesting were their comments in applying the subject matter of the films to conditions today.

Information about these broadcasts as reported in the Youthbuilders regular services on the recording of young peoples opinions, may be learned from Youthbuilders, Inc., 220 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The Junior Conference Report

THE Junior session of the National Board of Review annual Conference is reported in the March number of the "Four-Star Final." The young people received very favorable comment on the way in which they conducted their session and reported their activities. Those interested in junior motion picture activities who wish to read the record may have copies of the Final at 10c.

Story Content of Early Films

(Continued from page 6)

picture had to be apologized for—as a sort of bootlegged article slipped in between important juggling feats. Griffith transformed it into a recognized form, which people lauded and recognized at that time as a new art form. This he did with one picture, *The Birth of a Nation*, which still rests, after twenty-five years, as the Plymouth Rock on a new shore of exploration. Today it still contains, technically, artistically, and aesthetically, a cinema which has rarely been surpassed and frequently has not been equalled. In comparison with it, *Gone With the Wind* is but another pebble on the beach. In its day it was something which, aside from the problem of racial conflict, explored a new form of story telling. Griffith became the greatest story-teller of his day.

It is to be hoped, if we are here celebrating fifty years hence, that we will have pictures technically as profound and aesthetically as far-reaching as *The Birth of a Nation*. Or let us hope, at least, that if we reach the stage of one hundred years of progress of the motion picture, we will have in diminishing returns only fifty years of abuse.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- f SAFARI—Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Madeleine Carroll. Based on story by Paul Hervey Fox. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. A romantic drama of big game hunting in Africa. Good photography and excellent acting on the part of Lynne Overman as a Scotchman. Paramount.
- m *STRANGE CARGO — Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Ian Hunter. Based on novel, "Not Too Narrow, Not Too Deep," by Richard Sale. Directed by Frank Borzage. A group of men escaping from a jungle penal colony, and a girl trying to get away from the island, come under the influence of a strange and gentle man, resulting in surprising reformations and salvations. The brutality that builds up the characters in their natural state is hardly made up for by the last-minute repentances, but the intention is there, and the characters are vigorous and the story full of excitement. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f THEY CAME BY NIGHT—Will Fyffe, Phyllis Calvert, Anthony Hulme. Based on play by Barre Lyndon. Directed by Harry Lachman. A rather clever story of a gang of jewel robbers who use an innocent man for their pawn only to have him turn them over to the police. (English production) 20th Century-Fox.
- fj *YOUNG TOM EDISON — Mickey Rooney, Virginia Wiedler, George Bancroft. Original screen story by Bradbury Foote, Dore Schary and Hugo Butler. Directed by Norman Taurog. The early life of an American boy whose unquenchable curiosity about how things worked or could be made to work, got him into a lot of trouble but eventually made a hero of him. Interesting incidents effectively dramatized. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f CALLING ON COLOMBIA (Fitzpatrick Travel-talk)—The beauties of Colombia, with emphasis on Cartagena. (Color) Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f FLYING STEWARDESS (Magic Carpet)—Interesting and instructive study of the work done by a girl as she rises from assistant stewardess to hostess on a big airliner. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FLYING TARGETS (Sport Thrill) — Shooting wild birds. Columbia.
- f FOLLOWING THE HOUNDS (Ed. Thorgersen Sports)—Fox hunting done in technicolor. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GOING PLACES No. 72—"The Land of Rhodes." A trip through Rhodesia in Africa. Universal.
- fj GOING PLACES No. 73—Science rides the rails, showing how the railroad tracks are welded to make smooth riding; a friend of the family, all about dogs. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES No. 74—A trip to Barbados which is called "Little England," showing the natives at work and the tourists at play. Universal.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 7, (6th series—"The Vatican of Pius XII"). Highly interesting survey of Vatican City, with emphasis on its historic importance in the past and the peace efforts of the present Pope. Well up to the usual standard of these productions. RKO-Radio.
- f NAVAJO LAND (Reelism)—Instructive account of the present existence of Navajo Indians in the capacity of government wards. RKO-Radio.
- f NORTHWARD HO!—A pictorial record of the filming of "Northwest Passage" in the northern woods. A super-trailer that is really interesting. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj NOT SO DUMB—Training of domestic animals. Good for "Be Kind To Animals" week. Paramount.
- f PENNANT CHASERS (Pathe Sportscope)—Stars of the baseball world in action. Swell for fans. RKO-Radio.
- fj SEATTLE, GATEWAY TO THE NORTHWEST—One of the interesting Fitzpatrick Traveltalks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SKIING TECHNIQUE (Sport Thrill)—Showing the technicalities of skiing. Columbia.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 72—Strange things and people. A most unusual house; a 36 year old race horse; a collection of horse-shoes; a railroad that runs to Ghost City, owned and run by one man; a walk from a church to the rectory paved with unclaimed tomb stones washed up by a flood; a tame duck who goes swimming with his little master. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 73—A stone mason who spends his spare time building a miniature stone castle; a school with only one pupil; making pictures with inlaid wood; a trained horse; a photographer who resembles Abe Lincoln. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 74 — The oldest store in the United States which sells nothing but drugs and herbs; a man who preserves baby shoes with metal for posterity; a woman who has spent fifty years making baskets; a miniature steam shovel; an armless girl who paints pictures with her toes for a living. Universal.
- fj STUFFIE—A Pete Smith Specialty, the story of a little dog who gets jealous of a big dog, and gets rescued by the big dog in a fire. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f TWO OF A KIND (Grantland Rice Sportlight) Showing how often brothers and sisters excel in the same sports. Paramount.
- f VAR I SKANE (Springtime in Scania, Sweden) —Some lovely glimpses of the Swedish countryside. Narration in Swedish. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f WHAT'S YOUR I. Q.?—A Pete Smith Specialty about a question and answer radio program. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MUSICALS, CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj HARE AND HOUNDS—An amusing cartoon of how the rabbits out-smart the dogs. 20th Century-Fox.
- f HOME MOVIES—One of Robert Benchley's funny sketches. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (Terry-Toon) —A duckling and a chicken come close to starting a barnyard feud. Plenty of egg-throwing. Bright and amusing color cartoon. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj PUSS GETS THE BOOT—A clever cartoon about a mouse that turned on a cat. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

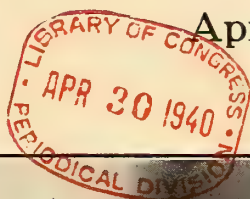
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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"Lights Out in Europe" (see page 12)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

m AND ONE WAS BEAUTIFUL—Laraine Day, Robert Cummings. Based on the novel by Alice Duer Miller. Directed by Robert Sinclair. A girl accidentally kills a man while driving, and lets a playboy friend go to prison for her—her sister ferrets out her secret, gets the man pardoned and marries him. Quite a strain on the credulity for anything so unimportant. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f BEYOND TOMORROW—Charles Winninger, Richard Carlson. Original screen story by Adele Commandini. Directed by A. Edward Sutherland. This begins as a sort of Christmas fairy tale, in which three old men are kind to a boy and girl alone in New York. Then the three godfathers are killed in a plane crash, but return in double exposure to watch over the fortunes of their proteges. Skilfully directed and acted. The story is rather sentimental and confusing, and it is reminiscent of many films on the same subject. RKO Radio.

m BILL OF DIVORCEMENT, A—Adolphe Menjou, Maureen O'Hara. Based on the play by Clemence Dane. Directed by John Farrow. A re-make of the celebrated problem play in which a wife divorces her insane husband after twenty years' separation, only to have him recover his reason as she is about to remarry. Though skilfully produced and acted, the picture's treatment of divorce and insanity seems dated today. RKO Radio.

f BISCUIT EATER, THE—Billy Lee, Lester Matthews. Original screen story by James Street. Directed by Stuart Heisler. Filmed entirely on location at Albany, Georgia, this

story of the training of a bird dog by two boys is startlingly out of the ordinary, far from the beaten track of films. Without stars or conventional love interest, it is nevertheless emotionally absorbing and gives insight into a way of life and a set of human values which seldom or never reach the entertainment screen. Paramount.

fj BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN — Jack Benny, Ellen Drew. Based on a story by Arthur Stringer. Directed by Mark Sandrich. An amusing comedy. Jack Benny goes through all kinds of antics to impress the girl he loves. Rochester, Benny's man of all work, and "Carmichael," the trained polar bear, are both excellent. Paramount.

fj *FLORIAN — Robert Young, Helen Gilbert. "Florian." Based on the novel by Felix Salten. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. An unusual picture in which the romance between a Duchess and a servant in the imperial stables centers about the handsome white stallion "Florian," one of the famous Lippizan breed so dear to the old Emperor and the nobility. The training and exhibiting of the horses, as well as a charming ballet danced by Baronova of the Russian Ballet, give novelty to the film. An excellent picture for "Be Kind to Animals" week. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f GOLDEN GLOVES — Richard Denning, Jean Cadney. Based on story by Maxwell Shane. Directed by Edward Dmytryk. A prize-fight picture. A racketeer fight promoter is put out of business by a bunch of amateurs. Paramount.

f IT ALL CAME TRUE—Ann Sheridan, Jeffrey Lynn, Humphrey Bogart. Original screen story by Louis Bromfield. Directed by Lewis Seiler. The title tells the story. A mother, about to lose the boarding house she runs, tells herself that her lost son will return in time to save the situation. He does return—penniless and bringing a gangster who must hide from the police. The gangster tries to frame the boy, then relents and lets him marry the girl, at the same time saving the boarding house. The moral is that wishing will make it true, and that a gangster can't win because a soft heart won't let him. Warner Bros.

f *IT'S A DATE—Deanna Durbin, Kay Francis, Walter Pidgeon. Original screen story by Norman Krasna. Directed by William A. Seiter. A bright and amusing story of an actress and her daughter who are slated for the same role in a play and to marry the same man. Everything turns out well when the mother gets the man and the daughter the part in the play. Universal.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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You Want Better Movies?

NATURALLY. Everybody does. That is, everybody wants more of the kind of movies he—or she—likes best. Each person's preference is usually each person's idea of a better movie, and not so many people, if they can get what they want themselves, care very much about what other people want. So a man who runs a movie house often has pressure groups pressing for their own special tastes. But the one group he has to submit to in the long run is that which presses up to his box-office cash in hand, through his doors and into the seats of his theatre.

If you have wished that your favorite movie theatre never showed anything that you or your family or your friends didn't like, maybe you have tried to do something about it. And maybe, in the course of this attempt to do something, you have heard of "block booking" and "blind selling." And you may have heard of the Neely Bill*, which is concerned with these two trade practices in the renting of films to movie exhibitors, and heard that this bill will bring about what you most want—nothing but good movies at your theatre. That is what has attracted many people to this bill.

If you are seriously interested in what pictures come to your theatre you ought to look into this bill very carefully, and make known

* *Senate. S. 280: Passed the Senate at last Session. House. H. R. 145: Now pending before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce in the House.*

to your representative in Congress what you think of it. If better pictures is what you are after, and you have an idea this bill will give them to you, you should particularly try to find out if this idea has any reasonable foundation.

Find out if, with the provisions of this bill in operation:

1. The manager of your theatre is going to book pictures to please you, or to please somebody else whose tastes may be quite different from yours?
2. If he finds it profitable to please you and others like you, is he going to be able to get any more films of the kind you like than he gets already?
3. Will there be any difference in the double-feature booking, which is supposed to supply something for everybody?

It is well to remember that there are two things involved in the picture business, the production end and the audience end. You have to have a picture, and you have to have someone to look at it. It is unimaginable in a democratic country that the kind of pictures made can be decreed by law, or that laws can make people go to a movie theatre when they don't want to. You can't create good movies or big audiences by legislation.

If that is what you are expecting the Neely Bill to accomplish, think it over.

The Art of the Silent Film

By RICHARD GRIFFITH

From an address delivered at the Annual Conference of the National Board of Review. Mr. Griffith is New York Film Correspondent for the Los Angeles Times.

TO speak, in February, 1940, of the art of the silent film is rather a give-away.

In an older man than myself it might be looked upon as a betrayal of nostalgia for the things that bring back one's youth. In a young man, and a young film critic, it is most often considered an affectation, a mannered aestheticism, a fuzzy-minded idealization of the past. I know this because in my own case it is considered all these things, and my continued affection for the silent film in the face of its commercial disappearance has made me the target of much good-natured and rather puzzled ridicule. Perhaps my amused critics get that way because my arguments remind them of the great controversy that arose in 1927-28, when sound first became an immediate possibility. In those days, the film aesthetes and theorists were lamenting the death of the film-as-art because, so it seemed to them, the addition of dialogue would spoil the "purity" of an "exclusively visual medium." Now I am not at all concerned about the theoretical purity of the film, except insofar as it contributes to the making of good movies. What does concern me very much are the practical effects of the development of sound, the lesson to be learned therefrom. Briefly to sum up that lesson, as I see it: the factor of silence tended to force the makers of silent films to discover the nature of film form, while the factor of sound tends to encourage movie-makers today to obscure and slight the medium.

The way in which silence and sound have affected the movies is visible from end to end of film history. A modern instance is contained in what we have heard here today. Mr. Lusk, in his talk*, reminded us of the fun of picture-making when films were silent—

of the exhilaration, the extraordinary hopefulness, the excitement which surrounded the studios of those days. Think from what he has told us to Miss Landi's description* of the factory routine, the assembly-line methods, by which each picture is standardized to a rule-of-thumb formula in Hollywood today. The introduction of sound is certainly one of the things that have influenced this change from experiment to mass production. To go back to the very beginning of things, I have often wondered whether there would ever have been an art of the film at all if sound apparatus had been perfected simultaneously with the movie camera and projector. The earliest owners and manipulators of the movies thought of them as a means of reproducing a stage performance without the voice. Had they also been able to record dialogue, the film might have become merely a recording machine, with no more independent existence as a medium of expression than the phonograph has. Fortunately, they were not able to do so. They had to find other means of expression to compensate for the absence of dialogue, and silence forced the early directors to break down the stage scenes into shots and film only those details of background and action which advanced the story. In doing so, in establishing the shot instead of the scene as the basic unit of film construction, they had created a new medium of expression without meaning to. The camera was that medium; the camera had become a projection of the spectator's mind, its movements corresponding to the natural shifts of his attention, with the added godlike ability to focus that attention on any object in space and throughout time.

When we watch a good film we are creators as well as spectators; what happens on the screen seems to be a reflection of our will to participate in action and yet at the same time preserve enough detachment to under-

* Published in the February issue of the *National Board of Review Magazine*.

* To be published in a forthcoming issue of the *National Board of Review Magazine*.

stand it. We see a man walk down the corridor, and all at once we are one with him, seeing its walls and windows through his eyes. As he leaves it to go into another room, we have suddenly jumped ahead and are there awaiting him. Equally abruptly, we remove ourselves to the other side of the world or—most marvelous of all—we hie ourselves backward into the past to witness and participate in some event related to what we have already seen only by the connection we make with our will. All these abilities of the movie camera were very early established by experimental directors, and D. W. Griffith summed them up as early as 1916 in what is still the formal masterpiece of the movies, *Intolerance*. In this picture, Griffith told not one but four stories and told them simultaneously instead of consecutively, and cutting from one to another with awesome rapidity so that, as Iris Barry says, "history seems to pour like a cataract across the screen." To relate these events, so distant in time and space, Griffith used every camera device known before or since and the film, again to quote Miss Barry, "exercised a considerable influence on the work of other directors, especially in post-revolutionary Russia, where *Intolerance* was widely shown and closely studied. The very short shots so characteristic of the Russian school are seen at their source in *Intolerance*, and so is the moving camera photography generally associated with the post-war German school." In short, this extraordinary film contained all the basic implements of filmcraft and perfectly illustrated film structure. For catholicity of method it stands alone, and later workers have taken from it only what they best could use.

The German film makers (who may have been unconscious of their debt to Griffith) developed the technique of the moving camera because it expressed what they urgently wanted to say in the post-war years when the German cinema grew great. The rich profusion of fine film produced in Berlin from 1920 to 1926 was rooted in despair, for it was the product of a defeated nation, a nation turned in on itself. In those inflation years, the German film-makers were increasingly concerned with psychological themes, with the inner world of

the mind, and the camera in their hands became less a spectator, ever more a participant, if not the actual protagonist of the drama itself. Consequently there were in these pictures relatively few cuts and relatively many dissolves and moving camera shots, for the moving camera emphasized the participation of the spectator in the scene and the smooth dissolving of one picture into another suggested the dream-like atmosphere of an inner world, a world seen through the eye of the mind. In striking contrast, the Soviet technicians most frequently employed a stationery camera and used a direct cut. They found in Griffith's editing methods a correspondence to the dialectical method of reasoning to which they were philosophically committed, and they strove to emphasize this similarity, to make it the basis of all film technique. The editing plan of most of their films followed a pattern of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, which built a conclusion out of a series of contrasts and comparisons, at the same time creating a shattering emotional effect. Just as the Germans and Russians adapted the technique of *Intolerance* to their subjective needs, so did other countries during the years of discovery of the power of the silent film. The short-lived but important and beautiful Swedish cinema used the pictorial values of landscapes and natural phenomena to express a deep relationship between man and the soil. In France, the post-war aesthetes experimented with abstract films, investigating the mechanics of the medium and theorizing on its nature. The American movie was less homogeneous, more contradictory, than the other national cinemas of the time, but it too had a character. Broadly speaking, American films embodied the physical optimism of a growing people set over against a subterranean conflict to which the movies gave a moral form and a materialistic solution.

In the best of all this work, the capacities of the movie were fully exploited, its unique powers defined. Each of the national cinemas (to say nothing of a host of directors who developed clearly recognizable individual styles) explored a part of the total area which the movies could encompass; taken together, they filled that area almost to its limits. And in *Intolerance* the silent era had

produced at least one film employing all the capacities of the movie at once. The introduction of sound destroyed this tendency to expand toward the limits of the medium. The tendency, during the first years of the talkies, was in just the opposite direction. Early sound films used as little of the total movie area as possible. Everything was expressed through a conversation between actors in one set that possibly could be expressed that way, and the rest was generally left out. After ranging through all time and space in the silent days, the sound camera was chained down to the dimensions of the stage. The film had returned to its early subordinate function of photographing plays.

Optimists and easy marks at first believed that this "new" method of making films was a temporary necessity, that with the perfection of sound recording the camera would be given back its freedom. And sure enough, after a few years of the talkies, the tide seemed to turn. Films ventured off the sound stages, included sequences of spectacle or "atmosphere," and the cutting of interior scenes grew more refined and analytical. The result was not, however, a renewed development of film structure but a compromise, an adaptation of the photographed play idea. The basic scene was still—is still—the colloquy between actors in a single set, and the narrative is still unfolded primarily through dialogue. The added scenes of landscape and city streets are mere decorations, with no organic part in the picture. An opening shot of New York's skyline sets the local of a film, a sequence of "montage effects" clumsily bridges a continuity gap, but fatally soon and with fatal ease the camera settles down in front of Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, and remains there, a lethargic auditor, through the rest of the picture. In the German silent films the camera was a preternaturally sensitive eye, boring through the physical presentment of things to the mind's core. In the Soviet pictures it was a magic carpet, taking us to the ends of the earth as the theme's logic dictated. In the modern sound films it is all too often a literal-minded spectator, chained to one place and time, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, but what is on the surface of things. It has

lost its magic power and is a mortal only, and rather a dim-witted one at that.

The question remains, is sound responsible for this decline of the movie, and the answer is yes and no. Many of the aesthetes who first denounced the talking film are still denouncing it, though more sadly since it obviously is the only form of film now acceptable to the public. The temper of their remarks is nostalgic. As aesthetes they have missed the boat, for those master theoreticians of the cinema, Eisenstein and Pudovkin, as early as 1928 outlined a method by which sound would prove a logical addition to silent film form, if it were used imaginatively and imagistically instead of literally. The question which should have occupied all of us long before it did was, why has sound not fulfilled this foreseen function? And the answer, it is increasingly clear, is something that is only secondarily related to sound. It is, in fact, standardization.

The process of commercial standardization of the film industry was nearly completed by the first years of the talkies. Since then, the only person who has had much to do with a film as it passes through the studio-factory is the producer. He hires several writers but makes them work separately, and also sees that they are separated from the director, who in turn is not permitted to work in conjunction with the cutter when the film is finished. The object of this procedure is to see to it that each film approximates a tried-and-true popular formula as closely as possible. The producer takes from each of the workers whatever experience has proven to be his particular contribution to that formula, but at the same time carefully eradicates any contribution stamped with the personality of the individual.

This sort of standardization is the menace that has threatened films ever since their power to please became known and their marketability stable. In the silent days, and even after *Intolerance*, run-of-the-mill commercial directors still thought of the film as a means of photographing plays and hewed as close to the line of theatrical form as they could. But the absence of the spoken word acted as a stimulus, forcing them to find visual ways of saying things and to imitate the discoveries of the more progressive direc-

tors. Silence was a factor which operated *against* standardization because it minimized the function of the writer and producer. Whatever these two concocted between them, in the end it was the director who had to get it said on the screen and who must therefore be given a certain amount of freedom. The more freshly and positively he said it, the more likely it was that the resultant film would bear the stamp of his viewpoint and thereby escape the formula. Sound, on the other hand, has acted as a factor favoring standardization, and has played into the hands of the producer and the factory system. Since the narrative can now be told in terms of dialogue, it is possible to discard the loose scenario and lax control of the early days and substitute a complete "screen play" which leaves nothing to chance and still less to the imagination or inspiration of the director. In this connection, the writer has become a useful tool of the producer. Since 1930 most writers, instead of growing up in the industry as film specialists, have been imported from Broadway to serve an unwilling term in the studios at high salaries. Detesting their jobs, thinking of themselves as literary men rather than film-makers, they have made little or no effort to discover the movies themselves, but instead have written scripts as much like plays as possible. How should it be otherwise? They are trained to express themselves through the written word, and it would require something like a re-orientation of personality to learn the real technique of the screen. Therefore their shooting scripts express everything through dialogue, and reduce the director to the status of a stage manager who carries out the writer's instructions without contributing anything himself. Written by bored hacks, directed by impotent technicians, produced to a formula learned by rote, it is wonderful that films are alive at all, much less as lively as they frequently are.

That the movies are still alive, and the liveliest form of contemporary entertainment, is often taken to mean that the system

by which they are at present produced is a good one. I believe that the opposite is true, that the best films are those which somehow manage to get made against the grain of the system. To make such films the rule instead of the exception, the system must somehow be broken through. And this can only be done if those who write and direct and act can once more feel that the screen belongs to them, is a channel for their own ideas and feelings. Such ideas must be important, must be worth fighting to express, otherwise we can hardly expect Hollywood's well paid workers to risk their jobs on what is certainly a gamble. For the conscientious technicians who try to say something in their work must fight not only the formula system but a censorship, both legislative and internal, which says that important ideas are "controversial" and therefore tabu. This is the hardest fight of all, but whenever it has been won—as already in 1940 it has several times—the resultant films have testified that standardization is the real evil and that not sound but the misuse of sound is its ally. *The Grapes of Wrath* jumped back across the years of desuetude to a camera freedom as fine as anything the silent era produced. *The Primrose Path* used sound as an organic film device, to heighten imagery. In both pictures, film technique came alive again because the people who were using it cared about what they were trying to say. For the moment of making these films, at least, they had recaptured the freedom of the silent titans whose passionate purpose gave life to films which are still alive, not alone in memory, but actually when they are shown on the screen today.

A Theatre for Silent Films

NEW YORKERS who are interested in the silent film will find it very much at home in the Miami Theatre on 6th Avenue and 47th Street in New York City. Many of the early silent favorites may be seen there, along with appropriate piano accompaniments. Programs are changed weekly and include both short and feature length silent films.

The Motion Picture from the Silent Era to Sound

By ALBERT S. HOWSON

Mr. Howson, who is scenario editor of Warner Bros., and well-known to members of the National Board, delivered this address at the Conference.

FIFTY years ago, in the year 1889, Thomas A. Edison, after much experimentation and research had developed a certain degree of perfection, showed his first motion pictures to the public. They were very crude and primitive things, naturally, and in them moving objects and human beings appeared to move with incredible speed. A railroad train would pull into a station, doors would fly open and people would emerge, dashing about madly.

The reason for this seeming haste was that cameras were ground too slowly, and when I say they were ground, that is exactly what happened, because all cameras were worked by hand and were not operated with sufficient rapidity to approximate natural speed when the pictures were projected. In other words, too few individual pictures were taken to keep pace with the speed of normal movement, and when they were projected at the same rate of speed at which they were photographed, it gave people and objects the effect of moving very rapidly.

I recall seeing some of those first movies, which were objects of curiosity more than anything else. The primitive projection machines were inadequate as to light, which fluctuated considerably and, as a consequence, made watching motion pictures very trying to the eyes. They were therefore commonly known as "flickers". Mr. Edison and other scientists saw the possibilities of this precocious infant, and research and improvement continued until, in 1896, Mr. Edison published a pamphlet on the motion picture and, in a foreword, wrote what amounted virtually to a prophecy. He said, in effect, "I believe that in years to come, as a result of my efforts and the efforts of others who will doubtless enter the field,

that grand opera can be given at the Metropolitan Opera House with no material change from the original, and with singers and musicians long since dead." This would seem to indicate that Mr. Edison envisioned the sound picture of today. If so, he lived to see the fulfilment of his prophecy.

By 1900, several commercial companies had been formed for the manufacture of motion pictures. One of the largest and most important of these was Vitagraph, organized by Commodore J. Stuart Blackton, Albert E. Smith and William Rock. They established a studio in Flatbush, Brooklyn, and I recall passing their lot on the elevated railroad train and seeing actors being photographed on platforms out of doors. Some lurid melodramas, as well as comedies and slapstick farces, were made, mostly in one reel. Business grew rapidly and soon actors of the legitimate stage were drafted, although they entered motion pictures with misgiving and without any great degree of pride. An actor would meet his friend, look around furtively to see that no one was within ear shot, and then confide in a whisper: "I'm going to work in a picture tomorrow."

I was playing in the Proctor Stock Company at the 5th Avenue Theatre in those days and, between acts, motion pictures were shown. They were thrown on a transparent screen, and could be seen through the screen as well as from the front. We of the company used occasionally to watch them. The property man stationed himself behind the screen with a pan full of buckshot, which he used effectively whenever an ocean surf or a rain storm was shown. For the galloping of horses, he employed the usual cocoanut shells to give the effect of hoof beats, and other devices were used to simulate other sounds. The orchestra or pianist would play music appropriate to the situation on the screen. This was the equivalent of the incidental music always used in years gone by

for legitimate plays, when, for a love scene, something tender was played, and when, for a fight, what was then known as a "hurry" was employed.

Some of the more adventurous producers began to make pictures in two or three reels. There was a comic song that had its vogue in which someone invites someone else to "see Mary Pickford in 3 parts."

Finally, improvement in technique, lighting, sensitiveness of film, together with a realization that speeding up of cameras made for greater approximation of the speed of human action, so revolutionized films that pictures of five and six reels in length were indulged in. Movie palaces sprang up and employed not only expensive organs but large symphony orchestras as well.

Music has always played an important part in the development of motion pictures. Years ago, in a summer between theatrical seasons, I played in a couple of silent pictures at the old Famous Players studio, which was in a loft building in West 27th Street. There was one big studio floor on which several units worked at the same time. Mary Pickford was making a picture there and that sterling actress Henrietta Crosman was engaged in her first venture as a motion picture actress. Miss Crosman rehearsed and rehearsed her scenes and finally, in disgust, said "I give up, I can't seem to get into the mood." Then she realized that the one vital thing lacking that she had been used to in the theatre was incidental music. That afternoon a trio of musicians, violin, cello and melodion softly played selected music appropriate to the mood of the scene to be shot during the action. That solved Miss Crosman's problem.

The infant prodigy, the motion picture, was fathered by all of the arts, until, though much maligned, it became one of the arts, taking rank by right of birth, inheritance and accomplishment, with the seven fine arts of tradition: music, drama, painting, terpsichore, poetry, architecture and sculpture. Walls of prejudice had been surmounted and levelled by the international appeal of motion pictures.

They told their own story and made their story intelligible to all, eliminating the necessity of a trained mind or a glossary.

Nothing yet discovered by the arts and sciences had the potency for international amity and good will among all peoples of all degrees, that had the motion picture, with its unique capacity for educating and instructing while it entertained.

In the year 1560, a woman considered to be demented or a witch, and known as Mother Shipton, uttered certain prophecies in doggerel verse. Among other things, she said:

*"Carriages without horses shall go
And accidents fill the world with woe
Round the earth thoughts shall fly
In the twinkling of an eye.*

—
In the air, men shall be seen

—
*Iron in the water shall float
As easily as a wooden boat."*

And Mother Shipton was thought to be mad. But carriages *do* go without horses; thoughts *do* fly around the world in the twinkling of an eye; men *are* seen in the air and iron *does* float in the water. Had she prophesied "One day men and women, long since dead, will walk, and talk and love and hate" she could not have been thought more mad than she was; and yet that is just what has come to pass, as the result of what was really an accident.

The scientists of the Bell Telephone Laboratory are constantly working to improve and perfect the transmission of the spoken word over wires, and in their endeavors are sometimes led into by-paths which, if followed, lead to interesting developments. Some years ago such a by-path was encountered and an appropriation was made by the parent company, the Western Electric, for its pursuit. As a result a mechanical device was developed which would synchronize sound with motion pictures. Many of the leading film producers were approached and their interest sought, but all shied from it with the exception of the late Sam Warner, who saw its possibilities. Mr. Harry Warner first considered the instrument as a means of talking to people in remote localities who otherwise would never be privileged to see and hear the personalities and instrumental and vocal accomplishments of the world's great

artists and the rendition by fine symphony orchestras of the world's great musical compositions. With that thought in mind, he acquired rights to the device which, for commercial purposes, was called Vitaphone.

The Warner Brothers were fully aware that they were revolutionizing the motion picture industry, although the industry, as a whole, did not immediately appreciate that fact. Yet the talking picture was developed as a practical venture. It meant, of course, that all re-production equipment would have to be replaced by new projection apparatus. That in itself would be revolutionary, but it did not deter Warner Brothers. They leased the Manhattan Opera House on West 34th Street, put a flooring at stage height over the entire auditorium, thus making an enormous sound stage, and there, after brief experimentation at the Vitagraph Studio in Brooklyn, all the original sound pictures were made. I was privileged to direct most of those films, which were all short subjects.

At first, all sound was recorded on discs, similar in appearance to ordinary phonographic discs, and synchronization was effected by having the recording apparatus and the cameras attached to opposite sides of the same motor, so that when the motor started, recording and photography began simultaneously. For reproduction, a start mark was affixed to the film and also to the record, and when these were correctly adjusted synchronization was assured.

In those early days we had great difficulty in recording certain sounds. Recordings were made on four wax discs, simultaneously. A revolver shot was one of the most difficult things to record, because the concussion caused the needles on our waxes to jump and cut back right through everything that had been previously recorded, thus destroying the wax. All sorts of experiments were tried, such as removing half of the charge from the cartridges and firing the revolver in a barrel, but it was sometime before acceptable recording of a revolver shot was accomplished.

We encountered a similar difficulty when I was directing Weber and Fields in one of their sketches. Fields wore an opera hat and little Weber a regulation high silk beaver hat. During the course of their conversation, Fields took off his hat and crushed it

against his side, thereby collapsing it, and went on with the conversation. Weber looked enviously at Fields' hat, took his own off, pressed it against his side, trying to collapse it as Fields had done. After much fruitless effort he, in disgust, put his hat on the floor and jumped on it. Again we found that the concussion, caused by the breaking of that hat, had caused the needles to cut back through the waxes, rendering them useless. We smashed a dozen or more silk hats that day and spoiled many waxes before we finally obtained the desired effect.

Strange as it may seem, one of our greatest recording problems was to try and reproduce the tonal quality of a piano. Nearly all the other musical instruments recorded with great fidelity, but it was a long time before we finally succeeded in capturing the true tone of a piano.

On the evening of August 6th, 1926, at the Warner Theatre, 52nd Street and Broadway, the first Vitaphone pictures were shown to the public. To say that they created a sensation is to put it mildly. That first program consisted of an address by Mr. Will H. Hays, numbers by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of the late Henry Hadley, selections by Giovanni Martinelli, Mischa Ellman, Marion Talley, Efrem Zimbalist, Harold Bauer, and Anna Case. The feature picture was *Don Juan*, starring John Barrymore, and a beautiful and appropriate musical score had been synchronized by Mr. Hadley and the Philharmonic orchestra.

The late Michael I. Pupin, professor of electro-mechanics at Columbia University, was one of the guests that first night and after the performance he said with enthusiasm: "Just imagine watching Liszt today playing his piano, as he played it many years ago, and listening to the music which only his magic art could draw out of his obedient instrument! What a heavenly treat it would be today to look at Demosthenes of old and listen to his matchless oratory! I would give anything to look at Lincoln today and at the same time listen to his Gettysburg speech. No closer approach to resurrection has ever been made by science. The educational value of this achievement is so obvious that comments are superfluous."

The instantaneous success of Vitaphone began the first revolution of the motion picture theatre in so far as mechanical equipment was concerned. Gradually the old projection apparatus gave way to the machine that would enable the theatre to exhibit the new sound pictures. A portion of this new apparatus was a turn table on which the discs were placed. Now we were dependant on projectionists, who had been used to the silent film which made very few demands upon them, other than the threading of their machines. With the new device they were called upon to fix the start marks accurately on both film and records. Someone had had the foresight to realize that when a record finished playing it was quite likely that in lifting the needle from the center of the disc to the outside it might be handled carelessly and the discs might be scratched and injured. With this in mind, all Vitaphone recordings were so made that the start mark appeared in the center of the disc, and when the needle had run its course it could be lifted from the outer edge of the disc without endangering the record.

In course of time, there was a sufficient number of installations of the new projection apparatus to warrant experimentation with a feature length sound picture. One episode in *The Jazz Singer* had been successfully synchronized with dialogue and one or two sequences in subsequent features had been treated similarly, but the first complete sound feature picture was *Lights of New York*, directed by Bryan Foy. This was necessarily stilted, because at that time microphones were stationary and the means of "travelling" them had not been devised.

In those days, we photographed at the rate of 75 feet of film a minute and projected at the same speed. This was thought to approximate natural action and, to a certain extent, it did. Soon the majority of theatres were equipped for sound reproduction, but then another factor came to light. The discs were heavy; special containers had to be devised for their shipment; their weight increased the expense of distribution materially and sometimes, even with great care in packing, breakages occurred, necessitating shipment of replacements.

Experiments in sound on film were going

forward rapidly and in course of time film recording was developed to a sufficient state of perfection to warrant the beginning of the abandonment of discs. This naturally caused another revolution with regard to projection apparatus and gradually theatres began to discard the original sound projectors and install the new ones for the reproduction of sound track recording.

For several years after the advent of sound on film, however, pictures were supplied to exhibitors that could be used on either device, because many of the smaller exhibitors found the new apparatus too expensive and their business did not warrant installation of the new equipment immediately.

Today, all theatres throughout the world (there may be one or two isolated disc equipments still in operation) are equipped for reproduction of sound on film.

Contrary to what may be a common thought, the sound is not recorded directly opposite the picture that is visible on the screen. Because of the law of science, that light travels faster than sound, we give our sound a 19 frame head start, so that it reaches the screen simultaneously with the image on the film.

I just used the word "frame." By frame we mean a little individual picture. There are 16 of these frames to each foot of film. So that our sound is recorded more than a foot on the margin of the film before the scene during which it is heard becomes visible.

Incidentally, with the coming of the sound track, we found that we were not accurately approximating natural action and so we stepped up our photography to 90 feet of film a minute and our projection to 90 feet of film a minute. Anything photographed at a greater speed than 90 feet a minute, and projected at the normal rate of 90 feet a minute, becomes "slow motion". The recording of sound on film has had the effect on the technique of production of restoring to the screen the same pace and rapidity of change from scene to scene that obtained in the silent era and which was lost temporarily in the early sound films.

Great strides have been made in the

(Continued on page 18)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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RICHARD GRIFFITH
HENRY HART

JOHN A. MCANDREW
MARY B. MILLER

FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON
VIRGINIA PATTERSON

RUSSELL POTTER
FREDERIC M. THRASHER

FRANK WARD

Lights Out in Europe

Produced and directed by Herbert Kline, associate producer Peter Mayer, production manager, Rosa Harvan Kline, photographed by Alexander Hackenschmied, commentary written by James Hilton, spoken by Frederic March, musical score by Werner Janssen. Distributed by Burstyn and Mayer.

THIS is probably going to be called a Documentary film — that forbidding term which has become almost a cult word, which moreover is taking on more and more special definitive meanings among its experts that interest nobody *but* the experts; and which, again moreover, if displayed on a movie house marquee, is enough to send most of the paying customers hurrying by to some other place in search of something not so odorous of dusty files and arid information.

So I'm not going to be one of those who call *Lights Out in Europe* a Documentary, and slice it up like a laboratory specimen to find out if it conforms in this and that detail of the genus documentarius, because it is far too alive and moving to be damned by any such dry-as-dust epithet. It might be called a super sort of newsreel, since it is concerned with stuff that is news while it is new, before it gets into bound volumes for library shelves. But even newsreel isn't just the word: it is more like a letter home from someone in a far country with a gift for picturing what he has been seeing. It is, in fact, a picture letter from Herbert Kline and Alexander Hackenschmied about what they saw in England and Poland while war came

nearer and finally struck in those two countries. It doesn't analyse or argue, at least on the surface, nor go academically into causes and effects, or try to assume a historical perspective. It simply, but with subtle significances, shows what people did and how they felt and acted under the shadow of approaching war, such people as we all are when we are being shoved around by forces we don't understand. Its interest, its tremendous interest, lies in the fact that those people of England and Poland are people like ourselves, and its lesson, if there must be a lesson, is that confusion is fatal and that we can't let ourselves be shoved around confusedly if we want to escape disaster. Such disaster is potentially only a few hours away, these days. If, like a good little Documentary, *Lights Out* poses a problem and points to a solution of it, the problem is no more specific than that war is war, and the solution is as universally general as that the way to stop war is not by more war but by peace.

Naturally, since it is human and vivid, this film has a point of view, an angle of interest and sympathy. The interest is not so much in totalitarianism versus democracy or what Germany or England or France or Russia are fighting for—there's hardly anything of that except by implication—as in what happens to ordinary people who want to do their work and live their precious unimportant lives and persist in believing that this is a world in which they can keep on doing that. And the sympathy is overwhelmingly with those ordinary people, as the danger they hate to see coming and try not to see draws near, and reluctantly they have to prepare

for it, and eventually are faced with it. There is a hint of something wrong with the leadership that cannot stave off this danger, the glimpses of Chamberlain and his wife in their daily walks "as usual," General Smigly-Ridz reassuring the Poles that they will be protected by his fine cavalry while his own cavorting steed almost throws him, Polish soldiers being railroaded to the front while their ammunition is left unmoved on the side-tracks. But essentially the concentration is on the people themselves, those who have to suffer the invasion, those who have to fight against it. To this extent it is like Kline's *Crisis*, which made such a fine record of Czechoslovakia when the Nazis went in.

This picture was made before Finland was attacked, even before Russia moved into Poland. It ends when Germany swept into the Polish Corridor and England declared war and the blackout came to London. Kline and Hackenschmied by dividing their work between Danzig and England were able to cover the two places simultaneously, and their picture shifts back and forth as the war that the English and Polish leaders persisted in saying would not come gathered itself and struck. What they were able to photograph was significant for their purpose, and being photographed so graphically and put together so expertly it makes a powerful and eloquent record of the rank and file of two nations being driven to fight. The commentary, written with restraint and no hoop-la by James Hilton and spoken without any melodramatics by Frederic March, keeps a level tone of impersonal observation that is far more effective than argument or exhortation. Werner Janssen's music, sometimes self-consciously descriptive, fits with mathematical exactness to the pictures it accompanies, if that is the function of movie music.

Lights Out in Europe is one of those films that like diaries and personal memories furnish the background for the events that get into history books, the daily living marking the pathway to a crisis which is usually unrecorded and therefore unavailable for the historian when he is looking for illumination on his head-line events. For what it is, for the way it is done, for future reference, it is a fine and valuable film.

(Rated Exceptional)

J. S. H.

Rebecca

Adapted by Robert E. Sherwood and Joan Harrison from Daphne Du Maurier's novel, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, photographed by George Barnes, musical director Franz Waxman. Produced by David O. Selznick, distributed by United Artists.

The cast

Maxim de Winter.....	Laurence Olivier
Mrs. de Winter.....	Joan Fontaine
Mrs. Danvers.....	Judith Anderson
Major Giles Lacy.....	Nigel Bruce
Beatrice Lacy.....	Gladys Cooper
Jack Favell.....	George Sanders
Colonel Julyan.....	C. Aubrey Smith
Frank Crawley.....	Reginald Denny
Mrs. Van Hopper.....	Florence Bates
Dr. Baker.....	Leo G. Carroll
Tabbs.....	Lumsden Hare
Robert.....	Philip Winter
Ben.....	Leonard Carey
Coroner.....	Melville Cooper
Chalcroft.....	Forrester Harvey
Firth.....	Edward Fielding

ALFRED HITCHCOCK, the English genius of melodrama, has made his first Hollywood picture, a brilliant screen dramatization of that highly popular novel *Rebecca*. Brilliant in the sense of keeping remarkable faith with the best-seller-readers of the novel by making the picture just what they hoped it would be. Perhaps that is due to Mr. Selznick. That astute producer, who had many good and often distinguished films to his credit before he became a news-headline figure through his long and finally triumphant bout with *Gone With the Wind*, has learned better than anyone else that a popular novel fares much better with movie audiences if it doesn't disappoint those who liked the book. So, like the Scarlett O'Hara marathon, the O'Selznick *Rebecca* sticks close to its author, even to lasting a bit too long for comfort. Hitchcock, working according to a discipline he has never shown signs of submitting to before, will reap the reward of a larger public than he has ever known, and will be a bit of a disappointment to that rather cultish minority who keep revivals of his earlier English films going in New York.

Rebecca is a twentieth century replica of *Jane Eyre*, a crafty melodrama decked out with quality settings and something vaguely known as "psychology." It has a dark and handsomely brooding hero, obsessed with a mysterious sorrow in the form of a first wife



Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine in "Rebecca"

whose character is only gradually revealed, a young, sweet and not too worldly heroine, an atmosphere of hidden doom fascinatingly increasing to violence, and even a final catastrophe in the form of a fire—the Charlotte Brontë formula almost to a T.

- The Selznick-Hitchcock production elaborates this formula in a handsome style that will be immensely satisfying to Miss Du Maurier's readers. They will not mind sitting through the longish period of Maxim de Winter's courtship and his young bride's timid embarrassment with the servants in the ancestral mansion to which she is taken, for they know what is coming and will be content to wait for it. Those not in on the secret of *Rebecca*, the dead first wife whose presence haunts the Cornish home of which she had been such a brilliant mistress, will perhaps get a jolt when they finally learn what the mysterious husband has really been bothered about. The question of how much a secret should be kept from an audience is a ticklish one, but there is fair reason to suspect that in this case the secret was kept too

closely. The time, in the last part of the picture, is pretty short for adjusting one's self to an entirely new feeling toward the husband's conduct. A plot surprise, in a mystery story, is one thing, a character surprise, with all its upsetting of emotional attitudes, is another.

Hitchcock fans will have to put up with a surprising lack of the characteristic Hitchcock improvisations in the way of salty minor personages and humorous interludes, and satisfy themselves with a masterly exhibition of the Hitchcock skill in creating suspense and shock with his action and his camera. Hitchcock has always had a way of being at his best three-quarters of the way through a picture and getting bored and careless toward the end—in *Rebecca* all his most effective efforts, those which have brought him his special fame, have been reserved for the last reels, in spite of a long stretch of talk necessary to explain the mystery.

The cast (it practically goes without saying) is exactly right. Laurence Olivier is going to get typed pretty soon if he keeps on

doing this *Wuthering Heights* kind of brooding hero, but he does it with a charming kind of magnificence that is extremely effective. Judith Anderson needs little more than her grim costume and her grim quietness to conjure up the malevolent housekeeper, but it is enough to display a sinister figure with a good deal of power. In Joan Fontaine the discerning Mr. Selznick has created yet another star, an utterly ingratiating embodiment of girlhood and likeableness. Nigel Bruce and George Sanders stand out prominently at their vastly different best, and the others are as good as possible. Only one shouldn't have to see C. Aubrey Smith so often. His C. Aubreyness has reached such a towering peak of inevitability that even in the smallest part he comes trailing clouds of former stout-fellerism, and instinctively, whatever is going on, you feel you ought to stand up, as if a trumpet had suddenly blown "God Save the King." J. H. S.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

The Primrose Path

Screen play by Allan Scott and Gregory La Cava from the play by Robert L. Buckner and Walter Hart, based on the novel, "February Hill," by Victoria Lincoln, directed by Gregory La Cava, photographed by Joseph H. August. Produced by Gregory La Cava, distributed by RKO Radio.

The cast

Ellie May Adams	Ginger Rogers
Ed Wallace	Joel McCrea
Mamie Adams	Marjorie Rambeau
Gramp	Henry Travers
Homer	Miles Mander
Grandma	Queenie Vassar
Honeybell	Joan Carroll
Thelma	Vivienne Osborne
Carmelita	Carmen Morales

LOOKING back over ten years, it becomes increasingly clear that the best thing the talkies have done has been to get next to the surface of the American scene. Pictures of the 1930's have had a richness of naturalistic detail which made them interesting even when they didn't stand analysis. As Otis Ferguson points out in



Ginger Rogers and Marjorie Rambeau in "The Primrose Path"

Films, this development has been due to the fact that Hollywood's people are for the most part only a few years removed from the life they are portraying, and only a little effort is required for them to remember how it all looked and sounded. In a very deep sense indeed, Cagney, Blondell, Hymer, Jenkins, et al. are actually the people they are pretending to be. What they offer is hardly acting in the tradition of the theatre, but it is something vastly satisfying because it belongs integrally to the film and intimately to our time. It is probably a new art, and its practitioners are artists in the fullest sense of the word, because they know what they're doing.

The trouble so far has been that they have had to practice their art in a vacuum. They could give us real people against real backgrounds, but it all added up to Hans Christian Andersen because the stories they were required to illustrate weren't really about the people who were in them. The goals of these stories were never the actual goals which real people would seek, but a sort of materialistic Valhalla perilously resembling Hollywood. In short, the naturalism of the acting jarred against the escapism of the narrative, and one or the other always seemed superfluous. *The Primrose Path* is one of the few pictures to escape this impasse. The acting makes sense because the characters not only look and sound like real people but behave like them too. It is all of a piece. As such, it is something of a milestone.

One's first impulse is to praise the acting, the direction, and the dialogue most of all. The dialogue is amazing. It might be a stenographic record of what can be overheard in any hamburger stand or Blue Bell Tavern from Atlantic to Pacific. It is spoken by Ginger Rogers, Joel McCrea, Marjorie Rambeau and the rest, with a sense of timing which derives more from a precise understanding of psychology than any learned technique. But everything in this picture is drawn from life. Everything the director and the actors do is calculated to lead you back to your own experience, be it first-hand experience of the situations displayed or mere observation of mannerism and dress and speech. The verisimilitude is more than photographic. It goes deep enough to stir

up all manner of memories and associations, so that you are drawn into the picture as a participant. These people are so closely your next door neighbors that you move among them.

All this, wonderful as it is, is simply a refinement, a final development, of the intimate naturalism Hollywood has worked at so long. What gives it substance for almost the first time is the validity of the story. Victoria Lincoln's *February Hill* was merely "delightful" to many people in its day, but it is about a situation which is not only exotically real around the edges but tragically real at the core. It has the logic of inevitability. Given a headless household, it was inevitable that Mame should become the breadwinner in the only way she knew. Equally inexorably, her manner of supporting her daughter gets between Ellie May and the things she wants. And there you are: "we live not as we wish but as we can." The marvel of it is that Ellie May, instead of entering a beauty contest or winning the sweepstakes, works out her problem in terms of the people and the circumstances involved.

Some have criticized her solution as Hollywood's makeshift to provide a happy ending, but it seems to me that not Hollywood but Miss Lincoln is at fault. Her essential situation is grimly true, but the plotting does not come out quite right. Grant that Ellie May's boy friend, being the boy friend he is, might have rejected her at first had he known about her mother. Would he also have done so after becoming her husband and learning the harmony of their marriage? It scarcely seems likely, for that harmony is one of the most beautifully convincing things in the picture. What is more probable is that Ellie May's sense of shame and Grandma's intriguing might have come between them for awhile. But not for long. For Ellie May was stronger than her problem. Its meaning for her and for the spectator is that she gained more strength from battling it, and the "happy ending" is what makes the picture a believable whole.

It is the wholeness that is most important, but it's a pleasure to dwell on the details, from Gregory La Cava's imaginative soundtrack to the acting of everyone in the cast.

Ginger Rogers, communicating a sense of identity with her character that is deeper than ever before, and more surely managed; Joel McCrea, surprisingly in command of himself in a role that fits; Henry Travers and Miles Mander, set into the background as a part of it; and Marjorie Rambeau, who needs a special word, for she plays out the tragic part of the story. It is Mame, who cried when she wanted to laugh and laughed when she wanted to cry, who bears the full burden of the situation that Ellie May mastered, and behind Miss Rambeau's gay vitality there is poignant realization. Equally important, Queenie Vassar makes of the relationship between Grandma and the child a terrifying analogy of the fate which awaited Ellie May if she had given in. It is as tight a leitmotif as though Ibsen had drawn it, and through it the whole life of the household is boldly rendered. These are the details, and there are many more as rich. The whole is a picture of human living and loving that is closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

R. G.

(*Rated Honorable Mention*)

Members' Activities

Dr. A. A. Brill, President of the National Board, whose address at the last Conference will be remembered by our delegates, will be interviewed in the June number of "Screenland."

Otis Ferguson, member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, is Film Editor of "The New Republic." His reviews appear regularly in "The New Republic," and an article "Life Goes to the Pictures" has just been published in the spring issue of "Films."

Glen M. Tindall, of the Board's Review Committee, has included in the series of Educational and Recreational Study Guides, several guides on musical films. They include *The Life and Loves of Beethoven*, *Moonlight Sonata*, *They Shall Have Music* and *The Mikado*. Before coming East Mr. Tindall was General Manager of the Hollywood Bowl and Supervisor of Municipal Music in Los Angeles. Thus he combines motion picture and musical interests in his work. He is at present Public Relations Consultant of the Hartford, Conn. Symphony Orchestra.

Miss Hazel Doten, besides reviewing with the National Board, is actively interested in fashion drawing. Her book: "Fashion Drawing and How To Do It," written with Constance Boulard, is being published by Harpers.

New York Members to Meet

THE members of the National Board in and around New York will meet at the Hotel Pennsylvania on Monday afternoon, April 29th. The gathering will be partly social, for members of the Board's various committees, Review, Executive and General, to get better acquainted with one another, and partly to discuss the relation of reviewing films to the more general work of the Board.

"Cinema Hall of Fame"

UNDER this title the Fifth Avenue Playhouse, near 13th Street in New York City, is planning a series of film programs, to run from May 10th to August 23rd. The Playhouse has been mentioned in these pages before as the go-ahead organization which has spent the summers of the last two years in presenting valuable and entertaining programs of films drawn from nearly every film-producing country in the world.

Their program this summer promises to be equally attractive but with an added interest regarding the selection of the films. With the help of "Cue" Magazine the Playhouse is inviting the man in the street to choose his own films, both foreign and domestic, either from a list provided by the management or entirely according to his own wishes. Under the headings: Comedy, Musical, Melodrama, Drama, Documentary, you are asked to write your choice on a ballot, and it is presumed that the most popular choices, if available, will comprise the program. This "Prepare Your Own Movie Program" scheme is one which the National Board supports warmly as an excellent principle of popular selection.

A portion of the box office returns will go to the Boys' Club of New York.

Cleveland Motion Picture Festival

THE Cleveland Cinema Club has again invited all Cleveland to observe with it its Third Annual Motion Picture Festival. April, the anniversary month for so many forward steps in motion picture history, has been established as the festival season and so the Cinema Club asks all cultural groups to join in a special recognition of the motion picture during the latter part of the month, April 28-May 4.

Libraries are to feature motion picture literature and book-film displays. P.T.A. groups, junior cinema clubs and motion picture classes will arrange special appreciation programs for all schools. Clubs, churches and forums are invited to use motion picture material for constructive programs. The Festival Committee of the Cinema Club is furnishing suggestions to all groups taking a part in these activities.

(Continued from page 11)

quality of tonal reproduction and in uniformity of tonal quality. The sound picture of today would seem to leave little or no room for improvement, but scientists are constantly working for greater perfection in every detail, not only of sound, but of photography, and there is no doubt that in the not very distant future, we will have three dimensional photography perfected to such a degree that a picture on the screen will have the same depth that a room now has to the human eye.

I said, in speaking of the first presentation of Vitaphone to the public, that Mr. Will H. Hays made a Vitaphonic address. Mr. Hays said, in part: "It has been said that the art of the vocalist and instrumentalist is ephemeral, that he creates but for the moment. Now, neither the artist nor his art will ever wholly die."

Catalog of Selected Pictures

THE annual Catalog of Selected Pictures, a yearly compilation of the pictures selected by the Review Committees of the National Board, will not be published in 1940. Since the same information ap-

pears in the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures, and monthly in the Selected Pictures Guide of the National Board of Review Magazine, there seems to be no special need for the Catalog except to provide in alphabetical form a list of all selected pictures for the year. Consequently, in the May issue of the Magazine there will be supplied such a list of 1939 pictures, as well as 1940 pictures to date, with reference to the issue of the Magazine in which they were reviewed, or to the Weekly Guide if they appeared in the summer when the Magazine is not published. Thereafter this Catalog will appear in the December issue of the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- m JOHNNY APOLLO—Tyrone Power, Dorothy Lamour, Edward Arnold. Original screen story by Samuel G. Engel and Hal Long. Directed by Henry Hathaway. Edward Arnold as a stockbroker sent to prison for embezzlement and Tyrone Power as his son, who becomes deeply involved with the underworld while trying to get his father paroled. Some of the situations won't stand analysis, but the picture is well directed and acted, and the characters themselves are unusual and interesting. Twentieth Century-Fox.
- f *LIGHTS OUT IN EUROPE—See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 12.
- f MIDNIGHT LIMITED—Marjorie Reynolds, John King. Original screen story by Harrison Carter and C. B. Williams. Directed by Howard Bretherton. A story about several robberies aboard the Midnight Limited for Montreal and how a young detective not only caught the gang, but also a wife. Monogram.
- m *MY SON, MY SON—Brian Aherne, Madeline Carroll, Louis Hayward. Based on the novel by Howard Spring. Directed by Charles Vidor. A moving translation to the screen of a novel concerned with a father's devotion to his son, and the question of what an unworthy son deserves from a generous and understanding father. A mature, finely produced and acted film, with some outstanding performances. United Artists.
- m PRIMROSE PATH, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 15.
- m *REBECCA — See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 13.
- f STAR DUST — Linda Darnell, Roland Young, John Payne—Original screen story by Jesse Malo, Kenneth Earl, and Ivan Kahn. Directed by Walter Lang. A more

than ordinarily intelligent story of Hollywood—of the defiant struggle of talented youngsters to make the grade to stardom, the bitterness of those who are defeated and must return home, and the greater bitterness of those who became stars for awhile and now linger on the shadowy fringes of the industry. Centered around methods of discovering and developing talent, the story often manages to depart from routine and gives many an insight into studio politics. 20th Century-Fox.

f **THOSE WERE THE DAYS**—William Holden, Bonita Granville. Based on the famous Siwash stories by George Fitch. Directed by Jay Theodore Reed. An amusing story of college life at the beginning of the century. The costumes and background keep well to the times. Paramount.

f **THREE CHEERS FOR THE IRISH**—Thomas Mitchell, Priscilla Lane. Original screen story by Richard Macauley. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. A homey story of a policeman and his three daughters. The father is heart-broken when he is retired and his daughter elopes with the rookie who has taken his job. Warner Bros.

m **TOO MANY HUSBANDS** — Jean Arthur, Fred MacMurray, Melvyn Douglas. Based on the play by W. Somerset Maugham. Directed by Wesley Ruggles. An amusing comedy with an "Enoch Arden" theme. Clever and sophisticated dialogue, and splendid acting. Columbia.

f **VIRGINIA CITY** — Errol Flynn, Miriam Hopkins. Original screen story by Robert Buckner. Directed by Michael Curtiz. Broad-scoped, many-charactered chronicle of an attempt to save the Confederacy from financial ruin by smuggling gold bullion from Nevada to the South. The hazards of the arduous journey across the intervening desert are excitingly pictured, though they are subordinated to the love dual of Miriam Hopkins and Errol Flynn. Warner Bros.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f **ARGENTINA (Color Cruise)**—Leisurely, piquant description of Argentine public buildings, resorts and natural wonders, photographed in color. Paramount.
- f **BLUE STREAK, THE** (Grantland Rice Sport-light)—Migration of the blue goose. Very lovely picture except for the shooting of the geese. Paramount.
- f **FASHION FORECASTS No. 7**—Views of forthcoming spring fashions, naturally staged, beautifully photographed in color, and wittily described by Ilka Chase. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj **FLAG SPEAKS, THE**—The story of the American flag told by a flag. Done in technicolor. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **GOING PLACES No. 75**—The wonders of Death Valley. Universal.
- f **GOING PLACES No. 76**—How pretzels are made, also a model goat farm. Universal.
- f **GOING PLACES No. 77**—A dude ranch. Universal.
- f **JACK POT (Crime Does Not Pay)**—Gangsterism growing out of the slot-machine racket is brought to bay. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **KNOW YOUR MONEY (Crime Does Not Pay)**—An interesting survey of how counterfeiting is detected and the criminals caught. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **LIFE IN PARIS (Columbia Tour)**—Conventional travelogue of Paris, moderately well produced and giving considerable emphasis to the customs of the inhabitants. Columbia.
- f **MARCH OF TIME No. 8, THE (6th Series)** "Canada At War"—An account of Canada's attitude toward the present European war, and her preparations for participation in it. RKO Radio.
- f **MEN WANTED**—A trip through Alaska done in color. Vitaphone.
- f **OVER THE SEVEN SEAS (Ed Thorgersen Sports)**—Interesting and well photographed description of sailing boats and methods of handling them. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 75**—A collection of tribal masks; Canadian wild geese; a cemetery for race horses; a trained wild canary; a pencil collector; helping salmon over the dam. Universal.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 76**—Pottery making in the primitive way; carving figures out of laurel roots; a fresh water spring in the ocean; collecting paper match boxes; animating figures for music boxes; Gomez, the man with nine lives. Universal.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 77**—An invention to make grass cutting easy; a fox terrier ball catcher; tiny figures made of wax; bottle caps for decorations. Universal.
- f **THREADS OF A NATION, THE (Cinescope)**—Interesting instructional film, showing the processes by which cotton is grown, manufactured and prepared for the market, and showing its importance to the world in terms of human values. Columbia.
- f **UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 4**—A girl expert in punching the bag; a dentist builds bridges of toothpicks in his leisure moments; painting pictures on cobwebs; a basket maker who makes the foundations for the high fur hats worn by the King's guard; an old man who has collected relics of the old Western days. Paramount.
- f **WASHINGTON PARADE No. 3 (The Federal Bureau of Investigation)**—A most interesting and instructional picture showing how the F.B.I. works. Recommended for schools and libraries. Columbia.

MUSICALS, CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj **ALI BABA BOUND**—Looney Tune Cartoon. Vitaphone.
- f **ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL (Terry-Toon)**—Cartoon comedy about three orphan kittens which are adopted by a dog. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **BLACKBOARD REVIEW (Color Rhapsody)**—Cartoon comedy caricaturing schoolroom life. Columbia.
- f **CARL HOFF & HIS ORCHESTRA** — Good music. Vitaphone.
- f **COMMUNITY SING No. 5**—Tastefully produced and well sung collection of Russian folk lyrics, with which the audience is supposed to sing along. Columbia.
- f **DOUBLE OR NOTHING (Broadway Brevity)**—Comedy played by those who double for stars. Vitaphone.
- f **GREYHOUND AND THE RABBIT, THE (Color Rhapsody)**—Cartoon comedy burlesquing typical technique of radio sports announcers. Columbia.
- f **HOME ON THE RANGE (Color Cartoon)**—One of Rudolph Ising's charming cartoons about a calf's dangerous adventures when it wandered away from its mother. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **IT MUST BE LOVE (Terry-Toon)**—Moderately amusing cartoon of the efforts of a heroic but dumb duck to save his ladylove from drowning. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **LABOR SAVERS**—Latest item in Lew Lehr's "Dribble Puss Revue" series, featuring a number of screwball inventions elaborate enough to belong in Rube Goldberg's gallery. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj **PILGRIM PORKY**—Looney Tune Cartoon. Vitaphone.
- fj **STEALIN' AIN'T HONEST (Popeye Cartoon)** All about a hidden gold mine on an island in the middle of the ocean. Paramount.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 5

May, 1940



Stars of "The Biscuit Eater" (see page 12)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f ALIAS THE DEACON—Bob Burns. Based on the play by John B. Hyman. Directed by Christy Cabanne. A most amusing comedy of a card shark who poses as a deacon and does well by himself and his friends. Universal.

f CHARLIE CHAN'S MURDER CRUISE—Sidney Toler, Marjorie Weaver. Based on the story "Charlie Chan Carries On", by Earl Derr Biggers. Directed by Eugene Forde. A highly entertaining picture of Charlie Chan, the great detective, who joins a round-the-world cruise to capture a strangler. Very exciting. 20th Century-Fox.

f DARK COMMAND—John Wayne, Walter Pidgeon, Claire Trevor—Based on the novel by W. R. Burnett. Directed by Raoul Walsh. A story of the struggle between northerners and southerners to get control of Kansas just before and at the outbreak of the Civil War, with a rivalry for the banker's daughter between a guerilla fighter and a marshal. Full of stirring action. Republic.

m DOCTOR TAKES A WIFE. THE—Loretta Young, Ray Milland. Original screen story by Aileen Leslie. Directed by Alexander Hall. Breezy and pleasantly foolish story about a young authoress who, after successfully selling a book describing the pleasures of a spinster life, finds her future sales and reputation threatened by press reports that she is secretly married to a young doctor. Most of the picture is a comic jumble of their efforts to escape into and out of marriage. Columbia.

f DOWN WENT MCGINTY—Brian Donlevy.

Akim Tamiroff, Muriel Angelus. Original screen story and direction by Preston Sturges. A story of a grafting governor who flees to Latin America and becomes a bartender when his crimes are discovered. Paramount.

f DR. KILDARE'S STRANGE CASE—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day. Original screen story by Max Brand and Willis Goldbeck. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Another hospital story, entertaining but highly improbable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f FORTY LITTLE MOTHERS—Eddie Cantor, Rita Johnson. Original screen story by Ernest Pagano and Dorothy Yost. Directed by Busby Berkeley. Eddie Cantor as a teacher in a fashionable girls' school runs into difficulties when he adopts a stray baby. Music is woven into the pictures and the baby is very cute. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f GAUCHO SERENADE—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette. Original screen story by Betty Burbridge and Bradford Ropes. Directed by Frank McDonald. Fresher than most Westerns on account of a more original plot. A boy is lured from his school in England by a fake telegram supposed to come from his father in California. Attempts to kidnap him on arrival in America are foiled by Autry and his boys. Usual pleasant singing and speedy action. Republic.

m I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE, BABY—Johnny Downs, Peggy Moran. Original screen story by Arthur T. Horman. Directed by Albert S. Rogell. A nice satire on the gangster films. A struggling young song writer and his fiancée get involved with gangsters. Universal.

m I WAS AN ADVENTURESS—Zorina, Richard Greene, Erich von Stroheim, Peter Lorre. Based on an original French film production by Gregor Rabinovitch. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. The ever popular theme of a girl crook who falls in love with her intended victim and then gets in bad with her accomplices, is used here with a number of original twists and plenty of humorous incidents. There is also a handsome ballet turn by Zorina, but it is strictly secondary to the fireworks and excitement of jewel stealing. 20th Century-Fox.

f IF I HAD MY WAY—Bing Crosby, Gloria Jean. Original screen story by David Butler, William Conselman and James V. Kern. Directed by David Butler. An entertaining little picture of bridge workers who take over and run successfully a New York restaurant with the aid of old time

(Continued on page 15)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Tastes and Audiences

ONE of the curious things about the movie business is that it is hard to think of any other which is so almost universally assumed to be everybody's business. Out of the millions who go to the movies there are few so humble as not to tell you confidently, if asked, what picture is good and what picture bad, and many will tell you, with the utmost assurance, whether they are asked or not. This is natural and healthy, since the movies do, in one sense, belong to everybody. They are made for everybody. But the tendency with some people is to go beyond mere liking or not liking (and saying so as if uttering a judgment), to wanting to do something besides talk: to regulate, and regulate not only what movies people ought to see but what movies are made, and how they are made, and how they are sold to the public. It is that very human yearning to have a finger in the pie which more than anything else lies behind all the local, state and federal measures to regulate movies that people are incessantly trying to get enacted. There aren't many pies you can put your finger in without getting the finger nipped, but the movies seem a safe and easy thing to poke into. Hence censorship, Neely bills, etcetera.

It doesn't occur to people, generally, that they can make a business of telling their neighbors they must buy a Packard instead of a Ford, drink coffee instead of tea, eat vegetables instead of meat, though they may have strong personal preferences or convictions in such matters. And yet it's with a

definite feeling that something ought to be done about it that many people wonder why anybody should want to see certain types of movies they themselves find distasteful. They know, or ought to know, that under present conditions they are as generally safe from poison on the screen as under pure food practices they are safe from being poisoned by what they eat, but when it comes to movie fare they wander, and sometimes wander far; away from the democratic principle of each man to his own taste so long as it doesn't harm his neighbors.

The problem of satisfying all reasonable tastes has been tackled with astonishing success by the makers of movies. Of course every picture can't be all things to all people, and few pictures can please everybody. There aren't enough people who like everything to support everything, which is where the element of selection comes in. Not everyone is selective, but obviously the selective section of the public is increasing. The mere fact that the younger generations, brought up on movies, form their tastes early and intensify them as they grow older, is bound to make the audiences of the future much more selective than they have been in the past, and it is such selective audiences that a previewing agency like the National Board serves with its advance information about films.

This increasing selectiveness among audiences gives the picture industry, at least the exhibition side of it, another problem which

(Continued on page 8)

A Plea for Unpopular Films

By ARTHUR L. MAYER

Mr. Mayer, director of the Rialto Theater in New York City, and distributor of many noted films, gave the following address at the National Board Conference in February.

WHEN Miss Olivia DeHavilland arrived in Atlanta recently to attend the opening of the biggest, if not the best of all movies, she was met at the station by a band playing "Dixie." "Oh, goody, goody!" Miss DeHavilland is said to have cried, "Isn't that sweet of them? They're playing the music from *Gone With the Wind*."

Some of you may be equally surprised at the naivete of an exhibitor who pleads for the production of unpopular pictures. By unpopular pictures I mean, specifically, those which desert the ancient well-worn boy-meets girl, boy-mates-girl formula and try to impinge on reality by facing and portraying with courage and maturity the conditions of life which surround us. I say that such pictures are unpopular and some of you will, I trust, disagree very strongly with me. Certainly, if you have been reading recent books and articles about motion pictures, you will have gathered a very different impression.

I, myself, although I know exhibitors are supposed never to read anything except the Saturday Evening Post and an occasional detective story, have recently read quite a few books about motion pictures. I must confess that when I did so, I felt not unlike Martin Johnson entering into some strange and forbidding jungle, unattended even by a native safari, or like Livingstone exploring the heart of a dark continent where things of a nature unpredictable and mysterious could occur at any moment. For instance, there is a thorough and well documented new book about the movies, "The Rise of the American Film" by Lewis Jacobs which, I think, all of you who are interested in pictures should, without question, read very carefully. But, although I like Mr. Jacobs' point of view, I warn you not to believe everything he tells you. For instance, he says: "Most people have become social

minded and have developed a more realistic attitude towards life's problems. The desperateness of economic conditions . . . have produced an intense popular interest in current events . . . movies reveal the change as it progressed from the suspicion that something is wrong to an awareness of widespread injustices and economic discrepancies." Movies have done nothing of the sort, although I deeply wish that they had done so.

In the January, 1939, issue of "Stage Magazine," Mr. Archibald MacLeish, one of America's most distinguished poets and critics, wrote, "Hollywood is in trouble at the box office—and the reason its pictures lack the fourth dimension of life is precisely that they do not know their own time, do not present their own time, do not belong to their own time, and, therefore, quite naturally, have lost the interest of their own time." Except for the partial loss of its foreign markets, which occurred since Mr. MacLeish's articles appeared, Hollywood is in no trouble at the box office. Loew's, Inc. last year earned \$9,841,531, and Twentieth Century-Fox also did very well. I do not know if Mr. Schenck of Loew's or Mr. Kent of Twentieth Century know what Mr. MacLeish is talking about when he refers to "the fourth dimension of life." But whether they do or they do not, you can be sure that they waste no time on it. By concentrating on escapist themes, they have made big profits for their stockholders and awe-inspiring salaries for themselves and their fellow executives. Personally, I question whether such concentration on immediate money making is desirable in the long run even from a strictly business point of view. Well managed, far-sighted corporations in other fields, like General Electric, for instance, spend a fortune yearly on experimentation—a very large portion of which must, by its very nature, prove valueless. I am, personally, inclined to believe that similar experimentation in the picture field using "B" product as a sort of guinea pig would,

in the final analysis, prove financially profitable. But, there is no doubt that, immediately considered, it would impair the financial returns which the executives believe are imperative.

I neglected to mention another new book about pictures, Mrs. Thorp's "America at the Movies." Stimulating as the book is, I cannot agree with the writer when she says: "A far larger section of the 85 million moviegoers than the producers have suspected were interested in other things besides boy-meets-girl—more and more people are going to the movies not just to relax or to pass the time. There are the montage boys interested, primarily, in the aesthetics of the screen. There are others whose concern is to have the movies pay some attention to the problems of real life." My heart is very strongly on the side of Jacobs, MacLeisch, Thorp and company, but my eyes, unfortunately, are with the executives. Every week, I receive the reports of some thirty or forty theatres. They furnish me with a record of the pictures played, and the receipts on these pictures. These theatres are in small towns as well as large, and they are located through the East, Midwest, and South. There is no indication from them that the public which, at the present moment, is patronizing motion picture theatres is anxious to have the movies pay attention to the problems of real life. Indeed, they only confirm the position taken by Frank Ricketson in his new and authoritative book "The Management of Motion Picture Theatres." Mr. Ricketson is one of the best motion picture circuit operators in the country. He is, though he does not know it, a pragmatist, who judges things only on one basis—do they work. He has no prejudices except those based on his experience and that of other showmen. He represents, I am sorry to tell you, the unanimous opinion of exhibitors when he writes, "Pictures built on themes of special interest other than pure entertainment are of little box office value. The photoplay designed to ride on public issues, be it morals, politics or any cause, is destined to mediocrity. Propaganda pictures miss the aim of good attractions. Churches, schools and libraries may educate and moralize. The theatres, rightly, offer only amusement."

At the close of each season, the motion picture trade papers publish *lists of pictures which exhibitors found the most profitable*. These lists, like All-American football selections, disagree in some slight details, but they do not vary very radically. I have before me, at present, the list drawn up by "Showmen's Trade Review", of the most successful 25 pictures for 1939. On it, I cannot find any mention of *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, which the National Board of Review, quite properly, called the best picture of the year. Neither can I find any mention of *Juarez*, about which Mrs. Thorp wrote, "The 85 million flocked to see it and its box office score mounted steadily."

I hope that none of you are getting the impression from what I am saying that *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* or *Juarez* lost money for their producers, or that pictures of this sort should not be produced. All that I am saying is that unfortunately they did not do so well at the domestic box office as typical escapist pictures in which Robinson, Bette Davis or Muni appear. There is a demand for pictures of a progressive nature, but it exists primarily on the part of people who do not regularly attend pictures and who, when given the opportunity to support mature pictures with social content, fail to do so sufficiently promptly or in sufficient numbers to offset the loss in patronage on the part of the frivolous or the exclusively entertainment minded. Four or five weeks after you have played and lost money with an honest realistic picture they call you up on the phone and seem surprised and considerably peeved that you are no longer showing the production.

Let me give you a few examples of recent experiences which only confirm results in the past. Last year, to everybody's amazement, RKO hatched an unpretentious "B" picture entitled *Boy Slaves*. It showed, in a somewhat lurid manner, child labor conditions in the turpentine camps of the South. It was not a million dollar production. It had no great actors in it. Neither the story itself nor the direction were distinguished. Nonetheless, it was a gallant picture. A thrust at injustice and cruelty by men who risked their jobs in making that thrust—a picture which every social minded man and

woman should welcome with gratitude and enthusiasm. No first run exhibitor in New York City wanted to show it, so we booked it into the Rialto Theatre. We screened it in advance not less than a dozen times, calling it not only to the attention of the anti-child labor organizations, but to progressive groups throughout the metropolitan area. We begged them to circularize their membership or to give us a list of members so that we could circularize them—asking nothing for ourselves, but begging that the picture be made a financial success for RKO so as to encourage both that company and the other companies (who invariably imitate success) to produce pictures of this nature. When I showed it to the representatives of these liberal groups I received some very interesting comments on the production. Apparently, they were surprised that RKO had not cast Cagney, Gable or Errol Flynn as the boy slaves and that they failed to show the pitiful peonage conditions in technicolor. We received many suggestions on how the picture could have been improved, but little cooperation. *Boy Slaves* was financially a complete failure and I think it can be safely predicted that no further productions dealing with child labor will emanate for many years from the RKO studios. They will, henceforth, specialize in such timely topics as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Swiss Family Robinson*.

Maybe you will feel that it is a little unfair to ask large producers, hamstrung by heavy overhead expenses and financial obligations to banks or other conservative institutions, to lead the way in making pictures on controversial subjects. I, myself, am inclined to believe that this is a proper field for smaller and more independent units. I have tried to make my practise coincide with this theory. For instance, this season we imported from France a picture called, *That They May Live*. It portrayed the horrors of the last war and showed the dead arising from their graves to prevent another similar catastrophe. It was made in France during the period of appeasement, but it could not be shown there today or in practically any other country in Europe. We are fortunate that we are still able to show such pictures in this country and we are

also fortunate in having a group of newspaper critics in New York City who, invariably, rally to the support of social minded pictures. Frank Nugent of the Times called *That They May Live* "Poignant! Significant! Performances of dignity, sincerity and depth. Your eyes will not leave the screen." Howard Barnes, of the Herald Tribune, wrote, "Daring, striking, challenging—not to be missed!" and Archer Winsten, of the Post, referred to it as, "A soul stirring performance. For the strong at heart." We opened the picture at the Filmarte which, two years ago, paid as much as \$45,000 for an artistic picture about the unfortunate love affair of a prince and a beautiful commoner, both long since dead. When the engagement of *That They May Live* was over, neither the exhibitor nor the importer was in a position to live much longer. The theatre has been closed ever since and, after we had deducted our share of the advertising, we did not receive a single cent of revenue for the showing. We have recently played *That They May Live* at the Rialto and in Hollywood. We have had no other bookings since then. Not a single anti-war organization has moved a finger to help this picture, which is the greatest potential anti-war propaganda ever produced.

Apparently, the horrors of war, though they may be endured on the battlefields, are too terrifying to be witnessed on the screen. So let us take, instead, the case of *Crisis*. About two years ago, a group raised enough money to send Herbert Kline and Hans Burger to Europe. With excellent judgment, they set up their cameras in Czechoslovakia just a few minutes before the Hitler assault on that little democracy. They remained in Czechoslovakia while the Sudetanland was overwhelmed by the invading Nazi hordes and returned with a picture so timely and so deeply moving that the National Board of Review has placed it sixth on the list of the year's best motion pictures. But although it won sixth place for merit, it was not six hundredth at the box office, for it took in less money than the average travelogue. Do not unjustly attribute this to indifference or hostility on the part of exhibitors. Both Warners and Loews tried to show the picture in their theatres and

only withdrew it after obtaining very unsatisfactory results. I have had any number of nice people say, "I would like to see *Crisis* some day." But, pictures, unfortunately, are not like books. They must be seen when shown, or they probably will never be shown again.

The City, that grim yet gay indictment of the modern metropolis, photographed by Ralph Steiner, is having similarly tough sailing. There is no need to refer back to such unfortunate fiascoes as Garson Kanin's beautiful *Man To Remember* or Paramount's epic of old age *Make Way for Tomorrow*. Both made history—tragic history—at the nation's box offices. The only value in stressing these misfortunes today is to help us face, more realistically and more resolutely, the problem of the future.

There have just been released three of the greatest pictures—socially considered—ever produced in Hollywood. I refer to *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men* and *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. There have been two previous Lincoln pictures, in the silent days, both of which were failures at the box office. I don't think I am divulging a state secret when I tell you that *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* has not opened well in Washington. Is it conceivable that this new and glorious picturization of the most vital of all American sagas is to be again unsuccessful?

In the field of documentaries Herbert Kline has just come back from abroad with a new picture entitled *Lights Out in Europe*. It does not aim, like previous war pictures, to show men engaged in deadly combat in trenches, in the air, at sea. Its object is rather to portray what happens to the man in the street or the man in the field, when old-fashioned statesmanship fails and modern warfare prevails. It seeks to speak for millions of human being in all lands—kindly, well intentioned folk harboring no enmity towards their neighbors, seeking only a minimum of security for themselves and their children. It shows these inherently peaceful people, bewildered by conflicting propagandas, caught in the web of racial and economic forces which drive them to death and disaster. We have an investment in *Lights Out in Europe* of approximately \$25,000, which is less than is frequently wasted on a

single scene, eventually discarded, in some gigantic Hollywood production. It was not produced to make a profit, although we are anxious, of course, to get our money back because, unless we do, we cannot continue to finance pictures of this nature. But above all we want this picture to be widely shown because it shouts aloud to the heavens the utter futility and bestiality of modern warfare.

To make a bad pun in a good cause, we want to make pictures with social content because they can help in bringing social content to our country. But like most good things in this world they cannot be obtained gratuitously and without effort. Let no amiable author give you the soft impression that you will not have to fight for them. I have quoted from many writers. In closing, let me quote from the least distinguished among them. Six years ago, in *Liberty Magazine*, I wrote an article which read in part as follows: "I believe that there is no exhibitor who does not greatly desire to be numbered among the socially useful members of his community. The reason he does not show pictures with artistic, social or educational merit is because the public has thus far been completely indifferent to pictures which fail to conform to the accepted canons of entertainment. If the reformer zeal could be thrown into campaigns for the support of meritorious and unusual pictures so that it would prove even moderately profitable to produce and exhibit them, the other problems of the picture industry would rapidly sink into insignificance."

These words are even truer today than they were at that time. Do not blame conservative producers, or stupid exhibitors, or block-booking, or circuit owned theatres, if you do not get the pictures you desire. In the final analysis, American pictures will be just as good as the American people demand and patronize. For many years the National Board of Review has done yeoman service in this direction. But neither it nor individual exhibitors or importers can carry the burden unaided. I appeal to you delegates and, through you, to all the progressive organizations who complain that pictures are too conservative; to all the intelligentsia, who sit around the dinner table jib-

ing at their immaturity, to all the parents and teachers associations who want them less romantic and more educational, above all to the countless Americans of every race and creed who want propaganda pictures—propaganda for democracy and tolerance and peace and the end of economic injustice—I appeal to all these vital and controlling and effective elements in our national life to support pictures like *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Lights Out in Europe*, so that they will be "widely shown and widely appreciated and their success encourage the production of even more useful pictures in the years to come.

Mrs. Thorp Replies

Sir:

Mr. Mayer, for the quite legitimate purpose of making a point in his highly interesting article, has credited me with a somewhat greater optimism than I feel or, I think, expressed in *America at the Movies*. I did not intend to suggest that the "unpopular films" were beginning to be the biggest money makers of the year, but I do think it a promising sign that commercial producers feel it worth while to experiment with social themes at all, that they have frequently made a decent profit from them, and that one finds exhibitors in small towns in Maine or Nebraska writing, for instance, of *Juarez*: "A very good picture which did above average business," or: "Big enough for extended runs in all spots."

Another phase of the problem, on which I very much wish that Mr. Mayer would give us his ideas, seems to me to be whether or not it is possible to introduce into films with a serious purpose, social or artistic, enough "glamour" or excitement of the kind the average moviegoer looks for to make them really effective at the box office.

MARGARET FARRAND THORP

(Continued from page 3)

it has probably been struggling with for years but which it has not yet solved—how to make it easy for people of differing tastes to find what they want without the trouble of shopping around.

In other words, the old question of different kinds of theatres for different kinds of people. If you want a hamburger or a hot dog you don't go to an expensive restaurant, and if you want an ice cream soda you don't go to a liquor bar. And if your appetite is all set for something like Paul Muni you are not going to be pleased by a menu that has only Jane Withers to offer. While the picture people are being stormed at by shot and shell from almost every direction they are doing well if they just keep riding, but sometime they will make people more contented if they find a way to make audiences always reasonably sure of how and where to find what they want when they want it. And that would perhaps do something to tap the vast reservoir of non-movie-goers, who have never got the movie habit because they refuse to waste their time taking chances, and so don't know what they are missing.

Changing the National Board of Review Magazine

IN recent weeks suggestions have been under consideration of ways in which the National Board of Review Magazine might be revised and expanded to meet the growing needs of film councils and other serious movie groups throughout the country. It is recognized that such a publication should not be simply an organ of the trade, or for high-brows or fans, but should contain material which, while being lively and interesting, will help groups and individuals in their work to the fullest possible extent.

To this end we wish to ask our readers for their co-operation. What we are interested in are suggestions from them as to what they would like a new magazine to be. While we cannot say at this early date how far we shall be able to make use of their suggestions, it will be of the greatest value to us to know more exactly the needs and wishes of both individuals and groups.

* * *

Since the majority of members of motion picture councils are not actively engaged during
(Continued on page 14)

An Actress and Her Work

By ELISSA LANDI

From an address given at the National Board Conference in February 1940.

IT is my intention to say a few words in defense of actors. Actors have borne with a lot of attack, much of it quite justified, but I wonder how many laymen know exactly under what circumstances motion pictures are made? We know actors are spoiled. That is to say, they earn a lot of money when they are successful. When they are successful, they live in very beautiful houses and are waited upon. At the same time, unless they are so successful that they are one of the first six in the industry, their working hours are anything from nine to twelve hours a day, starting exceedingly early in the morning. They rise around six, and it takes them an hour and a half to have makeup put on, and hair dressed, if they are women. The same often applies to the men. They go on all day in a very strange atmosphere—more strange than uncomfortable.

To begin with, there is the noise in a motion picture studio. The noise is incessant and inexorable. Usually one set is being destroyed while another one is being put up. And in between the hammering and the spraying of paint, the shouting and the whistling and the undue musicality of certain members of the company, during quite short periods of silence, the actors do their acting.

You all know, perhaps, that a shot infrequently lasts longer than two minutes. I think two minutes is a pretty good average for the duration of a single shot. Before that shot is taken there are the camera set-ups. And while the camera is being set up and the lights lighted and everything is going on to make the picture, the noise is quite terrifying. It isn't subtle at all. There is banging, and hammering, and spraying, and shouting.

In that noise you go over your lines with your fellow actors. Then a whistle is blown. You still go on rehearsing (with a little less noise) and then there is another whistle, and a tremendous yell. "Quiet! Can't you hear it? We want you to be quiet!" Then a final rehearsal and the picture is shot. The

minute the whistle blows after the shot the noise starts over again. That is one of the things you have to contend with—noise.

Secondly, there are the dust and dirt. I wonder what you would think if you could actually see the lily white hands of your favorite heroine, inevitably filthy in the lovely scene when she puts her hands on the hero's face. I have shuddered, when seeing such affectionate scenes on the screen, and have thought, "Good heavens, poor fellow!" However, it does not really matter; he has three layers of grease paint on his face, so she doesn't touch his skin at all.

Then there are the make-ups. For a woman even the lightest makeup is waterproof, which means it is oxygen proof. It is far from comfortable. If the woman is wearing an evening dress, her pores are closed on the shoulders and on her arms as well as on her face. If you do not think that would tend to give you a headache just try it sometimes for twelve hours on end.

However, I am not complaining, I am only asking you to bear these facts in mind sometimes when you see a bad performance. Also, bear in mind that you may be watching "Take 20", that perhaps the twentieth shot is printed and goes on the screen. That has something to do with spontaneity too. I always loved it when, at the nineteenth take, the director said, "Come on Landi, a little more spontaneity."

Then, even on a closed set—a set on which visitors are not allowed and no one may enter except on business—you have an audience, possibly an unwilling one, and one that is certainly not publicized, of at least twenty-four people. I am not quite sure how many people are on the set during the shooting of a picture that is not closed to the public or to anyone not on duty.

However, I do know that I once wanted to give a party for the crew of a picture I was in. I asked somebody to check up on everyone in case there were persons I had forgotten. I thought there would be about

twenty-five people at my little party, and I found there were forty-eight. I am talking now about the first cameraman, and his operator, and the camera boys, and the lighting crew, and the sound crew, and the make-up man, and the hairdresser, and the wardrobe woman, and the script girl, and so on, ad infinitum. They all watch the shooting of a picture. And if you think they are terribly sympathetic to your art, just let me correct you.

The director says, "Silence, please! This is a difficult scene. It is an emotional scene. Will you please be quiet and give her a break?" And, standing about fifty feet above the floor is a man doing something to a lamp, and he turns to his mate, points down with his thumb and tells him: "He says shut up—*art*."

Also, please remember the gentlemen with the scissors. I do not believe they use scissors but that is what they are called. You play a scene and you think you are being very subtle. You work it up to a certain climax, and then you hit the high spot at the end of the scene. The higher-ups look at the picture, which is intended to run an hour and thirty-five minutes, and find it runs two hours, so the man with the scissors comes along and cuts things out. Unless he is awfully clever he may cut out the bits that lead up to the climax. I have seen myself on the screen suddenly jump from complete placidity into hysterics without any working up to it.

If you come from the theatre, as I did unfortunately for motion pictures, you work up slowly. You start the scene 'down', then work 'up' gradually. By the time the picture is cut and your performance is about to hit the high spot—clunk! there isn't any high spot at all. That happens too. And sometimes you even find the 'high' spot coming before the 'low' spot. All of these things are not in the hands of the actors, they are largely in the hands of the directors.

Sometimes it happens that the director and the producers do not agree, and the director is kicked out and some stray gentleman with a completely new slant on the story puts the picture together. The fault for a confused picture lies with the pro-

ducers, in that case, but the actors bear the brunt of the blame.

This all may sound like complaint, but it isn't. It is simply a plea for tolerance. I do not know whether I have a right to plead like this, because, after all, those who pay their dimes have the right to get their money's worth and it is not their concern to know how the picture is made, or whether it is made under great difficulties. It is our business, and the business of the producers, to please the public one way or another, either to educate them or to entertain them.

I am not here to preach on anything. I repeat that it is not fair to expect the public to be tolerant; at the same time I could not resist this opportunity of telling you that we have our troubles, too, on the other side of the camera.

(Following her address Miss Landi replied to questions from the floor. We print below a selection of those questions and answers.)

Q. How much opportunity does the actress have to do the acting herself and not be instructed by the director as to how to act the part?

A. It rather depends on the situation, the director, and the story. I think it is quite possible—not easy but quite possible—to evolve a perfectly good motion picture with an actor who does not know in the least why he is doing anything or what it means, providing the director knows all about it. I think it is quite impossible for an actor to be good in a motion picture unless the director is good. I think a very good motion picture depends on a very good director, although I suppose a good actor can help.

Q. Might I ask how they choose films? In most large companies do they choose a film for a particular star, or in the general run of their pictures do they take a certain script and then work their cast up to the script? Is there any rule on that?

A. As far as I know, there is no ruling. It was once my experience that a short story was bought for the title. The title was *Sonata*. Another title was bought, *Sisters Under The Skin*. They made the story of *Sonata* and called it *Sisters Under The Skin*. Sometimes they buy a story for a special star. Sometimes they have a story or a title sitting around. They may have it for years

before they put an actor in it. At one studio they bought a title, *She Wears The Pants*. They tried those pants on all of us and we all refused to wear them.

Q. You said that you did not believe that an actress or actor could make a good picture without a good director. Do you think this would be true if the actress, or the actor, were given a chance to study the whole scenario?

A. I think even then, because the cutter might cut things away, and we are in the hands of the production office. We are not responsible for retakes. Suddenly a producer will get an idea that he feels will improve the story. It may be a very good idea. On the other hand, it may not really improve the story, but we have to make the retakes. Please bear in mind that with a very few exceptions the actors in the motion picture business have not much to say about the stories they do. And they have nothing to say about what their fellow actors should or should not do on the screen. I honestly believe that we are in the hands of the directors and the front office.

Q. What is your attitude toward the tremendous publicity given to the screen actors?

A. I hope you will believe me when I say that I regret it. However, I think publicity is important and necessary. It is necessary to the industry. There is something feeble in all of us, perhaps, but we do like personalities. I know I do. I know if I saw *Hedda Gabler* written up, I might pass by the theatre. But if I were to see "So-and-So in *Hedda Gabler*," however often I had seen it, I would go in and see So-and-So doing it. I think that is true and human, so I have to think publicity is a good thing. But I do not think it important for the public to know what toothpaste you use, whom you go out to lunch with, and what you eat. I think that is a bad thing. And I do definitely regret—and I say this with deep feeling—the strange subterranean contempt with which motion picture actors and actresses are regarded by the public on account of such publicity. If you have once been on the screen, the attitude is, "Well, you can't have any brains, you have been in the movies."

Q. Does it take much longer to rehearse for the moving picture than for a play?

A. You do not rehearse in moving pictures. Frequently the actors never meet each other before they play the scenes. That is one of the essential differences between screen and stage. For the stage, you rehearse a play for four weeks, you take it out of town, you often get together after rehearsal hours, and if you have a difficult scene you work it out across the tea table, and so forth. In motion pictures, if you get the script a week before they shoot it, you are lucky. It is shot out of sequence. You very often meet the actors you play with only on the set, and you say, "Let's do the lines, shall we?" Perhaps by the time you have learnt them somebody arrives with a sheet of paper and says, "Sorry, there was something in the script we didn't like. Learn these lines quickly. We are shooting in half an hour." You sit down and swallow it whole. It is awfully like swallowing a dinner in five minutes. You learn those words and do the best you can, and then the cameras grind on you. If it is any good it is because you have a quick grasp of the situation. It is a very different kind of art from that of the theatre. It is definitely an art, I believe, but I would not call it acting. It would seem to me an art of intuition, of sympathy. It is the art of sympathy above all, of knowing how people feel, but not the art of acting. I feel acting is definitely projection—putting something across. You must not put anything across—I think I may safely say—on the screen. You simply have to know it, or feel it, or believe it. That gets to the public. After all, your face is constantly under the microscope. It is enlarged from possibly one hundred and fifty to two hundred times its normal size. You do not have to act, in fact you must not act.

I would say that the art of the theatre is far more difficult. Whereas that of motion pictures is harder work, but it is not as difficult once you have the initial talent. Proof of this is that people are taken out of beauty parlors and made into stars with quite good results. It is because they have that inner intensity which will photograph. Nobody could be taken out of a beauty parlor and put on the stage. The theatre requires a cultivated technique; the movie doesn't.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Biscuit Eater

Screen play by Stuart Anthony and Lillie Hayward from a story by James Street, directed by Stuart Heisler, photographed by Leo Tover. Produced and distributed by Paramount.

The Cast

Lonnie McNeil	Billy Lee
Text	Cordell Hickman
Harve McNeil	Richard Lane
Mrs. McNeil	Helene Millard
Mr. Ames	Lester Matthews
Sermon	Snowflake
Promise (dog)	Tiverton-Invasion

IN these days of big pictures, *The Biscuit Eater* stands out for unusual things that have nothing to do with size or sensation or names or pretensions. Not many people will know in advance what its title means, and maybe if they get wind of the fact that it means nothing but a dog they won't be attracted. But if they will take a chance they are pretty sure to be amused, and excited, and moved, and will take away memories of a kind of life that will stay with them when many a more expensive star-sprinkled film has been forgotten.

It won't be the plot that will be remembered, except as something that's just as well to forget because it uses such a lot of old devices. The thing is, you're outdoors most of the time, racing with boys and dogs, and the movement is what carries you along, down in the woods and fields of Georgia where a white boy and a negro boy are as far away from the outer world as Chico in the Woodard brothers' unique picture of the Mexican country. These two boys want a dog to train, and they finally get one—the worthless one of a fine litter, the “biscuit-

eater,” the one that was to be thrown away. And they train it, and it becomes the star dog of the pack.

It's rather too bad it had to have a plot, because most of the plot elements seem to have been taken down from the shelf without bothering to dust them off when the director came in from a fine day of chasing the boys and dogs around and after thinking over the fun he'd had, decided that maybe it had been too much fun—he'd better tack on some story. He could have made a lot of story out of how they turned the little runt puppy into a champion: all that training would have been fascinating and exciting. But after all, the story holds together well enough, and it allows a lot of people who seem to be real to do the things that real people would do down in that part of Georgia where noble dogs are bred and brought up to practice their marvelous art of helping their masters hunt.

Billy Lee and Cordell Hickman are the boys, and barring a few lapses in which the latter is made to attempt humor of the old vaudeville “coon” style, they are as real and delightful a pair of kids as you'll want to find, with play and work all boiled together in the miraculous energy of youngsters tearing around outdoors. The talk is good, and the whole atmosphere. Stuart Heisler, a new figure in directing, knows how to use his camera and sound-track to keep the interest always awake, with things to watch and things to look forward to. Which of course is what makes a movie, and in this case a movie of a kind that comes along far too seldom.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J. S. H.



The French hostages in a German military jail

The Mayor's Dilemma

Scenario by Leo Mittler and V. Trivas from Leo Mittler's story suggested by August Rodin's statue, "Citizens of Calais," directed by Raymond Bernard, photographed by Robert Lefebvre, music by Darius Milhaud. English titles by Julian Leigh. Produced by S. Nebanzahl, distributed in America by Film Alliance of U. S.

The Cast

Beaumont, the mayor	Charpin
Annic, his daughter	Annie Vernay
de Rossignol, a land owner	Saturnin Fabre
Pierre, his son	Jean Paqui
Fabien, the town bailiff	Larquey
Rameau, the barber	Labry
Rodilard, the poacher	Dorville
Gendarme	Florian
Tartagnac, fencing master	Roquevert

THE Mayor's Dilemma has something more familiar about it than most of the French films we get, partly because the types of small-town French char-

acters who appear in it are the same we have seen in quite a lot of recent French movies, but most of all because the story is just the sort of things we might have done ourselves. It has its boy-and-girl love element, a gradually cumulative dramatic complication, and a happy ending. It has a lot of sentiment of the kind we like, a lot of comedy. Moreover, its French dialogue is so distinct and easy that anyone with a smattering of the language can follow it with prideful satisfaction. It isn't necessary, though, to know French to enjoy the picture.

The story begins with one of those half-comic family feuds—a quarrel over a right-of-way upon which the mayor's barn stands and the Romeo and Juliet of the village being kept apart by the complicated enmity between their fathers. But their secret marriage leads otherwise than to the family vault: the war comes, a German force captures the town and a German officer gets shot by the young bridegroom on leave for a

day's stolen honeymoon. He goes back to his company, unaware that the invaders will hold the whole village responsible for the death of the German officer, and demand the surrender of his killer.

It is here that the mayor's qualities come to the front at their best, in adjusting the conflicting temperaments and differences among his fellow townsmen to meet what in its small local way is a national emergency. And it is here that in a slight, rather commonplace story, some of the most likeable traits in French character loom so strikingly that they give the picture stature and distinction. Seeing the film you are carried along by its humor, its sentiment, its fine balance between atmosphere and individuals: remembering it you realize that in the process of being entertained you have been brought closer to the human side of the democratic French people.

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J. S. H.

Far to Go

SATURDAY'S CHILDREN is a sociological drama which comes at a time when the standard of such drama must be high in appeal and conviction. Its story, adapted from Maxwell Anderson's Pulitzer Prize play, has frequent moments of honesty and frankness, and its recreation of middle class life in a time of depression is generally a true and stimulating reflection. The air of unreality, of hollowness, that so often lurk behind the beards and noble sayings of the screen's great men of history are entirely absent from the people in *Saturday's Children*, in whom naturalness and simplicity persist despite every temptation to pose and postulate. John Garfield and Anne Shirley, delightfully supported by Dennie Moore and a capable cast, have every emotional qualification for holding an audience with their story of the hazards of unemployment in the early years of married life.

However, it is the structure and plan of this drama that pull it down as a convincing social commentary. In *Saturday's Children*

are all the blunders of psychology and situation which inevitably break down any atmosphere of real life no matter how capably the players play their parts. Real as these players are in their attitude towards poverty and one another, they are forced by the script to play cat-and-mouse in a way that is not only alien to the build-up they have been given, but seems to exist simply in order to move the action from one stage to another. Rims and Bobby are natural in their work and in their courtship, even in their minor deceits, but when Bobby is driven to the time-worn manouever of hiding her pregnancy, along with the letter which offers Rims a good but distant job; or when Rims, hitherto the soul of loving sympathy, flies into the passionate misunderstandings of a B-movie—then we are let down badly and blame them for what is really the fault of lazy writers. Apparently the facts of industrial depression and its effects on married life were well enough known by the writing team, but how to make them jive and move toward a convincing climax was beyond them. And so, as a solution, the best they can contrive is to make a goat of the idealistic Claude Rains, and send him nobly to the top of a high building for a suicide that will give his struggling youngsters a thick wad of life-insurance. This is sheer trickery: happy as we are to see Mr. Rains smilingly recuperating in a hospital bed, while young love forgets everything in a glad embrace, we are still bound to feel that all the main points at issue have remained unanswered and to walk away with our pleasant memories confined entirely to the smaller aspects of the film—the give and take of its comic interludes and the realness of the minor moments of worry and indecision in the lives of its characters.

N. D.

(Continued from page 8)

ing the summer months, the editors have decided to publish no June issue of the magazine, but to have instead a September number which will appear at the beginning of that month—a time when our publications are likely to be of most value to motion picture groups.

National Board Conference: November 14-16, 1940

IT has long been felt that the usual date of the National Board's Annual Conference should be changed for a more convenient time. On requesting the opinions of many who have attended past Conferences, and many who have wished to do so but have been prevented by bad weather, we found strong support for a Fall date. Consequently we are fixing November 14, 15, 16 as the days for our next annual meeting, and we believe this time will be found preferable by the majority of our affiliated groups.

The place of meeting will, as before, be the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

vaudeville actors. Bing and Gloria are a good pair of songsters and it affords a chance for some of the old-timers like Blanche Ring, Eddie Leonard, Trixie Friganza to stage a comeback. Well directed with an excellent supporting cast. Universal.

f IRENE—Anna Neagle, Ray Milland. Original screen story by Alice Duer Miller based on the play of the same name. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. A musical comedy, Cinderella type of picture in which a poor working girl finds her prince. Good cast and nice music. RKO Radio.

f LA CONGA NIGHTS — Hugh Herbert, Dennis O'Keefe, Constance Moore. Original screen story by Jay Dutler and Harry Cloak. Directed by Lew Landers. A hilarious comedy with music, song and dance. Hugh Herbert as a wealthy realtor also takes the parts of his mother and four sisters. He comes to the aid of a boarding house full of songsters and light steppers, and saves them from being dispossessed. Universal.

f LIFE OF GIUSEPPI VERDI, THE—Fosco Giachetti, Gaby Morlay, Beniamino Gigli. Original screen story by Lucio D'Ambra and Carmine Gallone. Directed by Carmine Gallone. Concentrates exclusively on the works of Verdi and the women who influenced him when he composed his music. What it lacks in treatment as a movie it makes up for in its generous presentation of Verdi's operas. Essentially a film for music-lovers. (Italian production with English sub-titles) Esperia.

m MAYOR'S DILEMMA, THE—(See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13).

f MIND OF MR. REEDER, THE—Will Fyffe, Kay Walsh. Based on a story by Edgar Wallace. Directed by Jack Raymond. A lively English melodrama built around a gang of counterfeiters whose members are hunted down by that quiet, unassuming old gentleman, Mr. Reeder. Manages to work in a number of typical British characters and occasions. Will Fyffe does a capable job in the title role. (British production)—Monogram.

m *MY FAVORITE WIFE—Irene Dunne, Cary Grant. Original screen play by Bella and Samuel Spewack and Leo McCarey. Directed by Garson Kanin. An absurd and laughable comedy about a husband who marries a second time, only to find that his first wife has not after all been drowned at sea and expects to go on just the same. Cary Grant is excellent as the unhappy "bigamist" involving himself deeper and deeper because of his inability to tell the second wife the truth. Excellently produced. RKO Radio.

f ON THEIR OWN—Spring Byington, Ken Howell, George Ernest, June Carlson. Original screen story by Val Burton, Jack Jungmeyer Jr. and Edith Skouras. Directed by Otto Brower. Due to the illness of the father, the Jones family are obliged to go out in the world and fend for themselves. In a somewhat questionable way they manage to raise enough to start a boarding house, into which they welcome boarders with huge families, packs of dogs, musical instruments etc., and soon run afoul of their neighbors. Far-fetched, but amusing. 20th Century-Fox.

m OUTSIDER, THE—Mary Maguire, George Sanders. Based on the novel by Dorothy Brandon. Directed by Paul L. Stein. Interesting story of a notorious doctor who because of his medical ethics is a rank outsider. Not until he cures the crippled daughter of a famous English doctor does he come into his own. Alliance.

f PALS OF THE SILVER SAGE—Tex Ritter. Original screen story by Robert Emmett. Directed by Al Herman. Despite having the same old story of rustlers versus the law, this Western manages to rise above the average by virtue of its beautiful backgrounds. The camera is well-placed throughout and greatly superior to the dialogue. Monogram.

m RETURN OF THE FROG, THE—Gordon Harker, Una O'Connor. Based on the story by Edgar Wallace. Directed by Maurice Elvey. Gordon Harker once more in his popular role as the cockney detective of Scotland Yard who tracks down the mysterious "Frog." Action on the Thames waterfront; lively and humorous, though put together in a somewhat haphazard manner. (British production) Select Attractions.

- f SAINT TAKES OVER, THE — George Sanders, Wendy Barrie. Based on the character by Leslie Charteris. Directed by Jack Hively. Another picture of the Saint series. This time the Saint comes to America to help his detective friend to clear up a mystery and becomes involved in a series of murders. RKO Radio.
- m SATURDAY'S CHILDREN — (See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 14).
- f SKI PATROL—Luli Deste, Philip Dorn. Original screen story by Paul Huston. Directed by Lew Landers. A grim picture of the present war, showing the ski patrol defending a mountain, the gateway to Finland. Beautiful snow scenes and some truly marvelous skiing. Universal.
- f SUICIDE LEGION — Tullio Carminati, Lilli Palmer. Directed by Norman Walker. A romance which opens in Vienna, a few months before the outbreak of the World War. A young Italian officer falls in love with an Austrian girl and takes her home to Italy—with painful complications resulting when Italy enters the war against Austria. While few of the situations are original, the treatment is adequate and the result entertaining. (British production) Film Alliance.
- f 'TIL WE MEET AGAIN — Merle Oberon, George Brent, Pat O'Brien. Original screen story by Robert Lord. Directed by Edmund Goulding. A romance aboard a ship bound from Hong Kong to San Francisco. Two people doomed to die, find happiness for a brief time. Warner Bros.
- m 21 DAYS TOGETHER — Vivien Leigh, Laurence Olivier. Based on a story by John Galsworthy. Directed by Basil Dean. Having killed a man accidentally, a youth spends three weeks with his bride before giving himself up. Interesting story but not awfully well done; a little too long. (British production) Columbia.
- f TWO GIRLS ON BROADWAY — George Murphy, Joan Blondell, Lana Turner, Wallace Ford. Original screen story by Edmund Goulding. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. Two sisters are rivals in love and for a career in their night club debut on Broadway. A story of conflicting emotions and sacrifice, lightly played with plenty of music and dancing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WAY OF ALL FLESH, THE—Akim Tamiroff, Gladys George. Original screen story by Lajos Biró and Jules Furthman. Directed by Louis King. A story of a man's gradual disintegration. Robbed of securities entrusted to him by the bank, Paul Kriza allows his family to believe him dead so as not to bring disgrace on them. Paramount.
- Hubbard Alaskan Adventure)—The Jesuit priest leads a party up a glacier to record temperature variations. Full of splendid snowscapes. Commentary by Lowell Thomas. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FASHION TAKES A HOLIDAY (Cinescope)—Sports and travel fashions. What the well dressed girl will wear on a vacation. Columbia.
- f FLYCASTING (Pathe Sportscope)—Casting for trout in an Idaho stream. Very pretty to watch. RKO Radio.
- f HIDDEN MASTER (Passing Parade)—An interesting picture showing what part luck plays in the lives of human beings. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f HOLLYWOOD, STYLE CENTER OF THE WORLD—Starts out to show that Hollywood sets the style for women all over the world, turns into an advance trailer of MGM pictures. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 7—Franklin P. Adams, Oscar Levant, John Kieran and Clarence Budington Kelland are the amusing experts on this famous program. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 8—Starring experts in this number are Franklin P. Adams, Oscar Levant, John Kieran and Ruth Gordon. Instructional, with plenty of laughs. RKO Radio.
- f *ISLES OF THE EAST (Magic Carpet)—Presents an excellent tour of the Dutch possessions in the East Indies, with some splendid shots of native life and methods of transportation on the inland canals. Recommended for schools and libraries. 20th Century-Fox.
- f MARCH OF TIME No. 9, THE (6th Series) "America's Youth—1940"—An interesting study of the activities of American youth with special emphasis on unemployment and the steps being taken to alleviate it. Broadminded and instructive. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 10, THE (6th Series)—An excellent picture covering the Japanese-Philippino situation. The Philipinos are not sure they want the independence they so bitterly struggled for. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- f MODERN NEW ORLEANS (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—A trip through the lovely city of New Orleans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f NEW HAMPSHIRE (Columbia Tours)—Beautiful scenes of old New Hampshire. Columbia.
- f SITKA AND JUNEAU (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—Sitka and Juneau, the old and the new Capitals of Alaska. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STADEN VID GOTA ALV (The City of Gothenburg)—Pleasant views of the city of Gothenburg. (Swedish production). Scandinavian Talking Pictures Inc.
- f XXX MEDICO (Passing Parade) — Showing what the radio has done for those stricken at sea. Interesting and instructional film. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MUSICALS, CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- f COMMUNITY SING No. 4—Dedicated to Stephen Foster. Singing his songs that have become so famous. Columbia.
- fj DONALD'S DOG LAUNDRY (Walt Disney Color Cartoon)—Donald Duck tries to wash a dog but ends by washing himself. RKO Radio.
- f HAVE YOU MET YVETT? (Headliner)—Paul Baron's orchestra and the petite song bird of the radio. Paramount.
- fj JUST A LITTLE BULL (Terry-Toon Color Cartoon)—When the rustlers stampede the herd into their corral, the little bull faces up to them and rescues his mates. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj KICK IN TIME (Color Classic Cartoon)—All about a little mule. Paramount.
- fj NEW PUPIL, THE (Our Gang Comedy)—Spanky and Alfalfa are punished for breaking a date with Darla. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj 100 PYGMIES AND ANDY PANDA (Lantz Color Cartoon)—Andy Panda has a magic wand which brings plenty of trouble. Universal.
- f SWINGIN' IN THE BARN—Excellent musical show and clever dancing. Universal.
- fj WOT'S ALL TH' SHOOTIN' FER? (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—A Southern mountaineer feud starts afresh when one family's cat courts the enemy's cat. An amusing idea fairly well presented, with many laughs. 20th Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f CLIMBING THE SPIRITS' HOME (Father

List of Selected Pictures: January-December 1939

The Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures, a yearly compilation of the pictures selected by the Review Committees of the National Board, will not be published in 1940. Since the same information appears in the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures, and monthly in the Selected Pictures Guide of the National Board of Review Magazine, there seems to be no special need for the Catalog except to provide in alphabetical form a list of all selected pictures for the past year. Consequently, we publish below a list of the Selected Pictures of 1939, with reference to the issue of the Magazine in which they were reviewed, or to the Weekly Guide if they appeared in the months when the Magazine is not published.

Key to Abbreviations

- f—Family Audience (12 years up).
 m—Mature Audience (18 years up).
 j—Juvenile Audience (Under 12 years).
 *—Indicates an above-the-average selected picture.
 Exc—Indicates a picture referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and rated Exceptional or Honorable Mention.
 WG—Refers to the Weekly Guide for the months when the Magazine is not published.

FEATURES

- f ADVENTURES IN DIAMONDS (Reviewed as—DIAMONDS ARE DANGEROUS) — Para.—Dec. '39.
 fj *ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, THE—Metro—Mar. '39.
 f ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE—20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
 m *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT—Univ.—Nov. '39.
 f ALL WOMEN HAVE SECRETS—Para.—Dec. '39.
 fj ALLEGHENY UPRISING—RKO—Dec. '39.
 fj ALMOST A GENTLEMAN—RKO—Apr. '39.
 f AMAZING MR. WILLIAMS, THE—Col.—Jan. '40.
 f AMORE SULLE ALPI (Alpine Passion) — Esperia—Dec. '39.
 f ANDY HARDY GETS SPRING FEVER—Metro WG July 22, '39.
 f ANOTHER THIN MAN—Metro—Dec. '39.
 f AT THE CIRCUS—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj *BABES IN ARMS—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f *BACHELOR MOTHER—RKO—WG July 1, '39.
 m BACK DOOR TO HEAVEN—Para.—May '39.
 f BAD LANDS—RKO WG July 29, '39.
 fj BAD LITTLE ANGEL—Metro.—Dec. '39.
 f BALALAIKA—Metro—Jan. '40.
 f BARRICADE—20th Cent. Jan. '40.
 f BEAU GESTE—Para.—WG July 29, '39.
 m BEAUTY FOR THE ASKING—RKO—Mar. '39.
 m BLACK LIMELIGHT—Alli.—WG July 22, '39.
 m BLACKWELL'S ISLAND—Warner—Mar. '39.
 m BLIND ALLEY—Col.—June '39.
 f BLONDIE BRINGS UP BABY—Col.—Dec. '39.
 f BLONDIE MEETS THE BOSS—Col.—Apr. '39.
 f BLONDIE TAKES A VACATION—Col.—Oct. '39.
 f BOY SLAVES—RKO—Feb. '39.
 f BOY TROUBLE—Para. Feb. '39.
 f BROADWAY SERENADE—Metro—May '39.
 f BURN 'EM UP O'CONNOR—Metro—Feb. '39.
 f CAFE SOCIETY—Para. Mar. '39.
 f CALL A MESSENGER—Univ.—Nov. '39.
 f CALLING DR. KILDARE—Metro—May '39.
 f CAPTAIN FURY—U. A.—June '39.
 f CAREER—RKO—WG July 8, '39.
 f *CHALLENGE, THE—Film Alli.—Apr. '39.
 f CHAMPS ELYSEES—Tri.—June '39.
 f CHARLIE CHAN AT TREASURE ISLAND—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
 f CHARLIE CHAN IN RENO—20th Cent.—WG June 10, '39.
 f CISCO KID AND THE LADY, THE—20th Cent. Jan. '40.
 m CITADEL OF SILENCE, THE—Film Alli.—Jan. '40.
 f CLOUDS OVER EUROPE—WG June 24, '39.
 f CODE OF THE STREETS—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 m CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY—Warner—May '39 (Exc).
 f COWBOYS FROM TEXAS—Rep.—Dec. '39.
 f CRIME IN THE MAGINOT LINE (Double Crime in the Maginot Line)—Tower—June '39.
 f *CRISIS—Mayer—Mar. '39. (Exc).
 f DANCING CO-ED—Metro—Nov. '39.
 j DANGER FLIGHT—Mono.—Dec. '39.
 m *DARK VICTORY—Warner—Apr. '39. (Exc).
 f DAUGHTERS COURAGEOUS — Warner—WG June 24, '39.
 f DAYS OF JESSE JAMES—Rep.—Jan. '40.
 f DEAD END KIDS ON DRESS PARADE, THE — Warner—Dec. '39.
 m DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES—Alli.—June '39.
 f DESTROY RIDES AGAIN—Univ.—Jan. '40.
 f *DODGE CITY—Warner—May '39.
 f DISPUTED PASSAGE—Para.—Nov. '39.
 f *DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK—20th Cent.—Dec. '39. (Exc).
 f DU GAMLA DU FRIA (Sweden, Thou Old, Thou Free)—Scan.—Apr. '39.
 f DUST BE MY DESTINY—Warner—Oct. '39.
 m EACH DAWN I DIE—Warner—WG July 22, '39.
 f EARL OF CHICAGO—Metro—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 f EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN—Univ.—May '39.
 f EL CORSARO NERO—(The Black Pirate)—Esperia—Nov. '39.

- m ELSA MAXWELL'S HOTEL FOR WOMEN—20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
- m ERAVEMO SETTE SORELLE (We Were Seven Sisters)—Esperia—June '39.
- f ESCAPE, THE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
- f ESPIONAGE AGENT—Warner—Nov. '39.
- f ETERNALLY YOURS—U. A.—Nov. '39.
- f EVERYBODY'S BABY—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
- f EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT NIGHT—20th Cent.—Jan. '40.
- m EXILE EXPRESS—Grand Nat.—June '39.
- f FAMILY NEXT DOOR—Universal—May '39.
- f FAST AND LOOSE—Metro.—Mar. '39.
- f FEDERAL MAN HUNT—Rep.—Feb. '39.
- f FIFTH AVENUE GIRL—RKO—Oct. '39.
- f FIGHTING THOROUGHBREDS — Rep.—Feb. '39.
- f *FIRST LOVE—Univ.—Dec. '39.
- f FIRST OFFENDERS—Col.—May '39.
- f FIVE CAME BACK—RKO—WG June 10, '39.
- f FIXER DUGAN—RKO—May '39.
- f FLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT—Rep.—Oct. '39.
- fj FLYING IRISHMAN, THE—RKO—Apr. '39.
- f FORGED PASSPORT—Rep.—Mar. '39.
- f FORGOTTEN WOMAN, THE—Univ.—WG July 1, '39.
- f *FOUR FEATHERS, THE—U. A.—WG June 24, '39.
- m *400,000,000, THE—Gar.—May '39.
- f FOUR WIVES—Warner—Jan. '40.
- f FRONTIER MARSHALL—20th Cent.—WG July 29, '39.
- m FULL CONFESSION—RKO—Oct. '39.
- f GERONIMO—Para.—Dec. '39.
- f GIRL FROM MEXICO, THE—RKO—June '39.
- m *GOLDEN BOY—Col.—Oct. '39. (Exc.)
- m *GONE WITH THE WIND—Metro—Jan. '40.
- f GOOD GIRLS GO TO PARIS—Col.—WG July 1, '40.
- fj *GOODBYE MR. CHIPS — Metro.—June '39. (Exc.)
- f GOING PLACES—First Nat.—Feb. '39.
- f GRACIE ALLEN MURDER CASE, THE—Para.—June '39.
- f GRAND JURY SECRETS—Para—May '39.
- f GREAT MAN VOTES. THE—RKO—Feb. '39.
- f *GREAT VICTOR HERBERT, THE — Para.—Jan. '40.
- fj *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS—Para.—Jan. '40.
- f *GUNGA DIN—RKO—Feb. '39.
- f HARDYS RIDE HIGH, THE—Metro—May '39.
- m *HARVEST—French—Oct. '39. (Exc.)
- fj HENRY GOES ARIZONA—Metro—Jan. '40.
- f HERE I AM A STRANGER—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
- f HERITAGE OF THE DESERT—Para.—May '39.
- m *HEART OF PARIS, THE—Tri.—June '39.
- f HERO FOR A DAY, A—Univ.—WG July 1, '39.
- f HOLLYWOOD CAVALADE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
- f HONEYMOON IN BALI—Para.—Nov. '39.
- f HONEYMOON'S OVER, THE — 20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
- f HONOLULU—Metro—Mar. '39.
- f HOUSEKEEPER'S DAUGHTER, THE—U. A.—Dec. '39.
- f *HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE—20th Cent.—Apr. '39.
- f HOUSE OF FEAR—Univ.—June '39.
- f HOUSEMASTER—Alli.—WG Aug. 5, '39.
- f *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, THE—RKO—Jan. '40.
- f I STOLE A MILLION—Univ.—WG July 22, '39.
- f IL SIGNOR MAX (Mr. Max)—Esperia—Dec. '39.
- m IN NAME ONLY—RKO—Oct. '39.
- f IN OLD CALIENTE—Rep.—WG June 24, '39.
- f IN OLD MONTEREY—Rep. Oct. '39.
- f INDIANAPOLIS SPEEDWAY — Warner—WG July 22, '39.
- f INSIDE INFORMATION—Univ.—WG June 10, '39.
- f INSPECTOR HORNLEIGH — 20th Cent.—May '39.
- f INSPECTOR HORNLEIGH ON HOLIDAY—20th Cent.—Jan. '40.
- m *INTERMEZZO, A LOVE STORY—U. A.—Nov. '39.
- f INVITATION TO HAPPINESS — Para.—June '39.
- f I'M FROM MISSOURI—Para.—Apr. '39.
- f ICE FOLLIES OF 1939, THE—Metro—Apr. '39.
- f *IDIOT'S DELIGHT—Metro—Feb. '39.
- f IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD—Metro—June '39.
- m *JAMAICA INN—Para.—Oct. '39.
- f *JESSE JAMES—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
- f JONES FAMILY IN HOLLYWOOD — 20th Cent.—June '39.
- f *JUAREZ—Warner—May '39. (Exc.)
- f JUDGE HARDY AND SON—Metro—Jan. '40.
- f JUST LIKE A WOMAN—Alliance—WG Aug. 5, '40.
- f KING OF THE TURF—U. A.—Mar. '39.
- f KUSTENS GLADA KAVAJERER (Happy Cavaliers)—Scan.—Nov. '39.
- m *LA FIN DU JOUR (The End of a Day)—Juno—Nov. '39. (Exc.)
- m LADY AND THE MOB, THE—Col.—May '39.
- f LADY'S FROM KENTUCKY, THE — Para.—May '39.
- f LAMBETH WALK, THE—Metro—Jan. '40.
- f LAW OF THE PAMPAS—Para.—Dec. '39.
- m *LE QUAI DES BRUMES (Port of Shadows)—Film Alli.—Nov. '39. (Exc.)
- f LEGION OF THE LAWLESS—RKO—Jan. '40.
- f LET FREEDOM RING—Metro—Mar. '39.
- m LET US LIVE—Col.—Apr. '39.
- f LIGHT AHEAD, THE—Carmel—Dec. '39.
- f *LIGHT THAT FAILED, THE—Para.—Jan. 40.
- f LITTLE ACCIDENT—Univ.—Dec. '39.
- fj LITTLE PRINCESS, THE—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
- f LOTTE NELL' OMBRA (Battles In The Shade)—Esperia—Nov. '39.
- m *LOVE AFFAIR—RKO—Apr. '39. (Exc.)
- m LUCKY NIGHT—Metro—June '39.
- m LUCRECE BORGLIA—Gallic—June '39.
- f MADE FOR EACH OTHER—U. A.—Mar. '39.
- f MAGNIFICENT FRAUD—Para.—WG June 24, '39.
- f MAISIE—Metro—WG June 10, '39.
- f MAN ABOUT TOWN—Para.—WG June 24, '39.
- fj *MAN IN THE IRON MASK, THE—U. A.—WG July 15, '39.
- f *MAN OF CONQUEST—Rep.—May '39.
- f MAN WHO DARED, THE—Warner—Oct. '39.
- f MED FOLKET FOR FOSTERLANDET (With The People For The Country)—Scan.—Mar. '39.
- f MEET DOCTOR CHRISTIAN—RKO—Dec. '39.
- f MIDNIGHT—Para.—Apr. '39.
- f *MIKADO, THE—Univ.—Apr. '39.

- f *MILL ON THE FLOSS, THE—Stan.—Dec. '39.
m MIRACLE ON MAIN STREET—Col.—Dec. '39.
f MIRACLES FOR SALE—Metro.—Oct. '39.
f MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
f MR. MOTO TAKES A VACATION—20th Cent.—WG June 24, '39.
ff *MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON—Col.—Nov. '39. (Exc).
m MUTINY IN THE BIG HOUSE—Mono.—Nov. '39.
f MUTINY ON THE BLACK HAWK—Univ.—WG June 24, '39.
f MY WIFE'S RELATIVES—Repub.—Mar. '39.
fj NANCY DREW AND THE HIDDEN STAIRCASE—Warner—Oct. '39.
f NANCY DREW, TROUBLE SHOOTER—Warner—June '39.
f NAUGHTY BUT NICE—Warner—WG June 24, '39.
f NEVER SAY DIE—Para.—Mar. '39.
f NEWS IS MADE AT NIGHT—20th Cent.—WG July 15, '39.
f NICK CARTER, MASTER DETECTIVE—Metro—Jan. 40.
f NIGHT OF NIGHTS, THE—Para.—Jan. '40.
m *NINOTCHKA—Metro—Nov. '39. (Exc).
f *NURSE EDITH CAVELL—RKO—Nov. '39.
f OFF THE RECORD—Warner—Mar. '39.
f OKLAHOMA KID, THE—Warner—Mar. '39.
m *OLD MAID, THE—Warner—Oct. '39.
f *ON BORROWED TIME—Metro—WG July 8, '39.
m ON TRIAL—Warner—May '39.
f *ON YOUR TOES—Warner—Dec. '39.
f *ONLY ANGELS HAVE WINGS—Col.—June '39.
f OUR LEADING CITIZEN—Para.—WG July 29, '39.
f OUR NEIGHBORS THE CARTERS—Para.—Nov. '39.
m PANAMA LADY—RKO—June '39.
f PAROLE FIXER—Para.—Jan. '40.
m PERSONS IN HIDING—Para.—Feb. '39.
f PHANTOM STRIKES, THE—Mono.—Dec. '39.
fj PRIDE OF THE BLUE GRASS—Warner—Dec. '39.
m *PRISON WITHOUT BARS—U. A.—Apr. '39.
f *PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH AND ESSEX, THE—Warner—Dec. '39.
f RAFFLES—U. A.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
m *RAINS CAME, THE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
f RANGE WAR—Para.—WG July 15, '39.
f *REAL GLORY, THE—U. A.—Nov. '39.
m REMEMBER?—Metro—Dec. '39.
f RENA RAMA SANNINGEN (Nothing But the Truth)—Scan. Dec. '39.
fj RENEGADE TRAIL, THE—Para.—Apr. '39.
m RENO—RKO—Dec. '39.
f RETURN OF THE CISCO KID, THE—20th Cent.—May '39.
f RIDERS OF THE FRONTIER—Mono. Oct. '39.
f RIO—Univ.—Nov. '39.
m RISKY BUSINESS—Univ.—Apr. '39.
f ROAD BACK, THE—Univ.—Dec. '39.
m ROARING TWENTIES, THE—Warner—Dec. '39. (Exc).
f ROSE OF WASHINGTON SQUARE—20th Cent.—June '39.
f RULERS OF THE SEA—Para.—Nov. '39.
f SAGA OF DEATH VALLEY—Rep.—Dec. '39.
f ST. LOUIS BLUES—Para.—Feb. '39.
f SAINT IN LONDON, THE—RKO—WG July 1, '39.
f SAINT STRIKES BACK, THE—RKO—Mar. '39.
f SCIPIONE L'AFRICANO (Scipio Africanus)—Esperia—Nov. '39.
f SECOND FIDDLE—20th Cent.—WG July 8, '39.
f SECRET OF DOCTOR KILDARE—Metro—Dec. '39.
f SECRET SERVICE OF THE AIR—Warner—Mar. '39.
m SERGEANT MADDEN—Metro—Apr. '39.
f SHIPYARD SALLY—20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
f SKANOR-FALSTEREO—Scan.—May '39.
fj SKY PATROL—Mono.—Nov. '39.
m SOCIETY LAWYER—Metro—Apr. '39.
f SOCIETY SMUGGLERS—Univ.—Mar. '39.
f SMILING ALONG—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
m SON OF FRANKENSTEIN—Univ.—Feb. '39.
m SOTTO LA CROCE DEL SUD (Under the Southern Cross)—Esperia—Dec. '39.
fj SOUTHWARD HO!—Rep.—June '39.
f SPELLBINDER, THE—RKO—WG July 15, '39.
fj SPIRIT OF CULVER—Univ.—Mar. '39.
f SPY OF NAPOLEON—Stan.—WG Aug. 19, '39.
f *STAGECOACH—U. A.—Mar. '39. (Exc).
f *STANLEY AND LIVINGSTONE—20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
f STAR MAKER, THE—Para.—Oct. '39.
m *STOLEN LIFE—Para.—June '39.
f STOP LOOK AND LOVE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
f *STORY OF ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, THE—20th Cent.—May '39.
f *STORY OF VERNON AND IRENE CASTLE, THE—RKO—Apr. '39.
f STREETS OF NEW YORK—Mono.—May '39.
m *STRONGER THAN DESIRE—Metro—WG July 1, '39.
f SUDDEN MONEY—Para.—Mar. '39.
m S'UED FOR LIBEL—RKO—Nov. '39.
f *SUN NEVER SETS, THE—Univ.—WG June 10, '39.
fj SUSANNAH OF THE MOUNTIES—20th Cent.—WG June 17, '39.
f *SWANEE RIVER—20th Cent.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
f TAIL SPIN—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
f TARZAN FINDS A SON—Metro—WG June 17, '39.
f TELL NO TALES—Metro—June '39.
fj *THEY SHALL HAVE MUSIC—U. A.—WG July 29, '39.
f THESE GLAMOUR GIRLS—Metro—Oct. '39.
f THEY ALL COME OUT—Metro—WG July 15, '39.
f THEY MADE ME A CRIMINAL—Warner—Feb. '39.
f THIS MAN IS NEWS—Para.—WG July 1, '39.
m THOSE HIGH GRAY WALLS—Col. Nov. '39.
f *THREE SMART GIRLS GROW UP—Univ. Apr. '39.
f THREE WALTZES—Vedis—WG June 10, '39.
f THUNDER AFLOAT—Metro—Nov. '39.
f TIMBER STAMPEDE—RKO—WG June 24, '39.
f TOO BUSY TO WORK—20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
f TORCHY PLAYS WITH DYNAMITE—Warner—Oct. '39.
f TORPEDOED—Film Alli.—Nov. '39.
m TOWER OF LONDON—Univ.—Dec. '39.
f 20,000 MEN A YEAR—20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
fj TWO THOROUGHBREDS—RKO—Jan. '40.
f TWO BRIGHT BOYS—Univ.—Nov. '39.
f *U-BOAT TWENTY-NINE—Col.—Nov. '39.
f UNDERCOVER DOCTOR—Para.—June '39.

- fj UNDER-PUP, THE—Univ.—Oct. '39.
 f UNEXPECTED FATHER—Univ.—WG July 15, '39.
 f *UNION PACIFIC—Para.—May '39.
 f UNTAMED—Para.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 m WANTED BY SCOTLAND YARD—Mono.—May '39.
 m WARE CASE, THE—G. B.—June '39.
 f WAY DOWN SOUTH—RKO—WG July 22, '39.
 m *WE ARE NOT ALONE—Warner—Dec. '39. (Exc.)
 f WHAT A LIFE!—Para.—WG July 1, '39.
 m WHEN TOMORROW COMES—Univ.—Oct. '39.
 m WIDOWS' ISLAND—Mod.—June '39.
 f WIFE HUSBAND AND FRIEND—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
 fj WILD INNOCENCE—Garfield—Apr. '39.
 f WINGS OF THE NAVY—Warner—Mar. '39.
 f WINNER TAKE ALL—20th Cent.—Apr. '39.
 f WINTER CARNIVAL—U. A.—WG July 29, '39.
 m WITHIN THE LAW—Metro—Apr. '39.
 fj *WIZARD OF OZ, THE—Metro—Oct. '39.
 fj WOLF CALL—Mono.—June '39.
 m *WOMEN, THE—Metro—Oct. '39.
 f WOMEN IN THE WIND—Warner—May '39.
 m *WUTHERING HEIGHTS—U. A. — Apr. '39. (Exc.)
 fj YOU CAN'T CHEAT AN HONEST MAN—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 fj *YOUNG MR. LINCOLN—20th Cent.—June '39. (Exc.)
 m YES MY DARLING DAUGHTER—First Nat.—Mar. '39.
 m ZERO HOUR, THE—Rep.—June '39.

CARTOONS

- f A HAUNTING WE WILL GO—Univ.—WG June 24, '39.
 fj ALADDIN AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMP—Para.—May '39.
 fj ALWAYS KICKIN'—Para.—Mar. '39.
 fj ANDY PANDA—Univ.—Oct. '39.
 j ANDY PANDA GOES FISHING—Univ.—Jan. '40.
 f AUTOGRAPH HOUND—RKO—Oct. '39.
 f BARNYARD BASEBALL—20th Cent.—WG July 8, '39.
 fj BARNYARD BRAT, THE—Para.—WG July 1, '39.
 fj BARNYARD EGG-CITMENT — 20th Cent.—June '39.
 fj BEACH PICNIC—RKO—Feb. '39.
 fj BEAR THAT COULDN'T SLEEP, THE—Metro—WG July 1, '39.
 f BIRD ON NELLIE'S HAT, THE—Univ.—WG June 24, '39.
 f BIRTH OF A TOOTHPICK, THE—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 fj BOLO MOLA LAND—Univ.—June '39.
 f BOOKWORM, THE—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj BOY, A GUN AND BIRDS, A—Col.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 fj CURIOUS PUPPY, THE—Vita.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 fj CUSTOMERS WANTED—Para.—Mar. '39.
 f DANGEROUS DAN McFOO—Vita—WG July 29, '39.
 f DAY AT THE ZOO, A—Vita.—Apr. '39.
 f DETOURING AMERICA—Vita.—Oct. '39.
 fj DOG-GONE MODERN—Vita.—Feb. '39.
 fj DONALD'S COUSIN GUS—RKO—May '39.
 fj FIRST ROBIN, THE—20th Cent.—Jan. '40.

- f FRESH VEGETABLE MYSTERY, THE—Para.—Nov. '39.
 fj FROZEN FEET—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
 f GHOSKS IS THE BUNK—Para.—WG June 24, '39.
 fj GOLDBLOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS—Metro—WG July 15, '39.
 f HELLO, HOW AM I?—Para.—WG July 15, '39.
 fj HOCKEY CHAMP—RKO—June '39.
 f HOOK LINE AND SINKER—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 fj I'M JUST A JITTERBUG—Univ.—Feb. '39.
 fj ICE POND, THE—20th Cent.—Jan. '40.
 j IT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO—Para.—WG July 22, '39.
 j KRAZY'S SHOE SHOP—Col.—WG July 8, '39.
 fj LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT FUN—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 fj LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE—Para.—May '39.
 fj LITTLE BROTHER RAT—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 fj LITTLE GOLDFISH, THE—Metro—June '39.
 fj LITTLE LION HUNTER—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 f LONE MOUNTIE, THE—Col.—Feb. '39.
 f LONE STRANGER AND PORKY, THE—Vita.—Feb. '39.
 fj MICE WILL PLAY, THE—Vita.—Feb. '39.
 f MOUNTAIN EARS—Col.—Dec. '39.
 f MOUSE IN A MILLION, A—20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
 fj MY FRIEND THE MONKEY—Para.—Mar. '39.
 fj NAUGHTY NEIGHBORS—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 fj NEVER SOCK A BABY—Para.—Dec. '39.
 fj OFFICER DUCK—RKO—Oct. '39.
 fj OLD GLORY—Vita.—WG July 15, '39.
 f ONE MOTHER'S FAMILY—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj ORPHAN DUCK, THE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT, THE—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
 f PETUNIA NATURAL PARK—Metro—Feb. '39.
 fj *POINTER, THE—RKO—Mar. '39.
 fj PORKY'S MOVIE MYSTERY—Vita.—Apr. '39.
 fj ROBIN HOOD MAKES GOOD—Vita.—Mar. '39.
 fj SCRAMBLED EGGS—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 fj SCREWBALL FOOTBALL—Vita.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 fj SEA SCOUTS—RKO—June '39.
 fj SHEEP IN THE MEADOW—20th Cent.—WG Sept. 23, '39.
 fj SLEEPING PRINCESS, THE—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 fj SMALL FRY—Para.—Apr. '39.
 fj SO DOES AN AUTOMOBILE—Para.—Apr. '39.
 fj THEIR LAST BEAN—20th Cent.—June '39.
 j WATCHDOG, THE—20th Cent.—WG Oct. 14, '39.
 fj WICKY-WACKY ROMANCE—20th Cent.—Dec. '39.
 f WORM'S EYE VIEW, A—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 fj WOTTA NITEMARE—Para.—May '39.

COMEDIES

- f AN HOUR FOR LUNCH—Metro—Apr. '39.
 fj AUTO ANTICS—Metro—Oct. '39.
 fj CAPTAIN SPANKY'S SHOWBOAT — Metro—Nov. '39.
 j COUSIN WILBUR—Metro—June '39.
 f DARK MAGIC—Metro—June '39.
 f *DAY OF REST, THE—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj DOG DAZE—Metro—WG July 8, '38.
 f *FEATHERED PESTS—RKO—WG July 29, '39.
 f GREAT KENNEDY, THE—RKO—Jan. '40.

- fj GREENER HILLS, THE—Metro—WG June 3, '39.
 f HOME EARLY—Metro—June '39.
 f *HOW TO EAT—Metro—WG June 17, '39.
 fj JOY SCOUTS—Metro—WG June 17, '39.
 fj MONKEYS IS THE CWAZIEST PEOPLE—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f RING MADNESS—RKO—WG June 10, '39.
 f SALES SLIPS—RKO—WG Oct. 7, '39.
 f *SEE YOUR DOCTOR—Metro—Dec. '39.
 f SMALL TOWN IDOL—Vita.—Mar. '39.
 f THAT INFERIOR FEELING—Metro.—Jan. '40.

INFORMATIONALS

- f ACRES OF PLENTY—RKO—Nov. '39.
 fj AGHILEEN PINNACLES—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f AIR WAVES—RKO—June '39.
 fj *AMERICAN ROYAL—RKO—Jan. '40.
 f AMERICAN SADDLE HORSES — Vita.—Jan. '40.
 fj ANCIENT EGYPT—Metro—Feb. '39.
 fj *ANGEL OF MERCY—Metro—WG June 3, '39.
 f ANGERMANLAND—Scan.—Mar. '39.
 fj *AQUA RHYTHM—Para.—Dec. '39.
 fj *ARABIAN BAZAAR—U. A.—Oct. '39.
 fj ASH-CAN FLEET, THE—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f BAKOM PANSRAD SIDA—Scan.—Nov. '39.
 fj BIG LEAGUERS—RKO—May '39.
 fj BIG TOWN COMMUTERS—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 fj *BILL OF RIGHTS, THE—Vita—Oct. '39.
 fj BIRTH OF THE MOVIES—Alli.—Jan. '40.
 fj BIRTHPLACE OF ICEBERGS — 20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
 f BLUE GRASS—RKO—Feb. '39.
 f *BOOK OF BOOKS, THE—Col.—Dec. '39.
 fj BOW STRING—RKO—Feb. '39.
 f BOWS AND ARROWS—Col.—Dec. '39.
 f BREAKING THE NEWS—Para.—Oct. '39.
 f BUILDING OF BOYS, THE—Col.—Dec. '39.
 f CATCHING WHOPPERS—Para.—Nov. '39.
 f CHILE—Para.—Jan. '40.
 fj *CITY, THE—World—Nov. '39.
 f CLOCKING THE JOCKEYS—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 fj COLOMBIA—Para.—WG July 15, '39.
 fj COLORFUL CURACAO—Metro—WG June 3, '39.
 fj CONQUERING THE COLORADO—20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
 f CULINARY CARVING—Metro—WG July 8, '39.
 fj DAY ON TREASURE ISLAND—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj DEATH VALLEY THRILLS—Para.—WG June 17, '39.
 f DEVIL DRIVERS—RKO—June '39.
 fj DIAMOND DUST—Para.—May '39.
 fj DIVING RHYTHM—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 f DOG IS BORN, A—Para.—Dec. '39.
 f DOOR WILL OPEN, A—Metro—WG Jan. 6, '40.
 fj *DOUBLE DIVING—Metro—Feb. '39.
 f DRUNK DRIVING—Metro—Nov. '39.
 fj ECUADOR—Para.—Nov. '39.
 fj *EVERGREEN EMPIRE, THE — 20th Cent.—Oct. '39.
 f EN OSTGOTARESA—Scan.—Nov. '39.
 fj FILMING THE FLEET—20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f FISHERMAN'S PLUCK—Para.—Apr. '39.
 f FOLK MELLAN FJALLEN—Scan.—Dec. '39.
 fj FOOLS WHO MADE HISTORY No. 1 — Col.—Dec. '39.
 fj FOOLS WHO MADE HISTORY No. 2 — Col.—Jan. '40.
 fj *FOOTBALL THRILLS, '38—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE—Vita.—June '39.
 f FORGOTTEN VICTORY—Metro—Jan. '40.
 fj *GIANT OF NORWAY, THE—Metro—WG July 1, '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 59—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 60—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 61—Univ.—Mar. '39.
 fj GOING PLACES No. 62—Univ.—May '39.
 fj GOING PLACES No. 63—Univ.—May '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 64—Univ. — WG June 17, '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 65—Univ. — WG June 17, '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 66—Univ.—Nov. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 67—Univ.—Nov. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 68—Univ.—Nov. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 69—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 70—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 f GOING PLACES No. 71—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 f GOLD—RKO—Mar. '39.
 fj *GOOD NEIGHBORS—20th Cent.—June '39.
 f GOOD SKATES—Para.—Apr. '39.
 f GREAT HEART, THE—Feb. '39.
 f GUN PLAY—RKO—Oct. '39.
 f HELP WANTED—Metro—WG June 17, '39.
 fj HEROES AT LEISURE—Metro—Mar. '39.
 f HISTORIC CITIES OF INDIA—Col.—Jan. '40.
 fj HOLD YOUR BREATH—Para.—Mar. '39.
 f HOLLAND AND THE ZUYDER ZEE—Col.—Dec. '39.
 f HUNTING DOGS—20th Cent.—Apr. '39.
 f HUNTING HOUNDS—RKO—Nov. '39.
 f HYDRO MANIACS—Para.—Oct. '39.
 f I SOL OCH SNO—Scan.—Mar. '39.
 fj ICE ANTICS—Metro—Mar. '39.
 fj ICE CUTTERS—RKO—Dec. '39.
 fj IMPERIAL DELHI—Metro—Mar. '39.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE—RKO—Oct. '39.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 2—RKO — Dec. '39.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 3—RKO — Dec. '39.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 4—RKO — Jan. '40.
 fj *INSIDE BASEBALL—20th Cent.—June '39.
 f JAI ALAI—Col.—Jan. '40.
 f JAMAICA—Para.—June '39.
 fj JAVA JOURNEY—Metro—May '39.
 fj JOCKEY'S UP—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 f JUDO EXPERTS—Para.—Jan. '40.
 fj KANGAROO COUNTRY, THE — 20th Cent.—Jan. '40.
 fj KENNEL KINGS—RKO—WG July 15, '39.
 f KING VULTURE—Col.—Feb. '39.
 fj KNOW YOUR HISTORY No. 1—Col.—Apr. '39.
 fj KNOW YOUR HISTORY No. 2—Col.—May '39.
 fj KNOW YOUR HISTORY No. 3—Col.—May '39.
 f LAND OF INCA MEMORIES—Para.—Feb. '39.
 fj LAND OF ALASKA NELLIE, THE—Metro.—Jan. '40.
 f LAPPLANDIA—Scan.—Apr. '39.
 f LET'S TALK TURKEY—Metro—Dec. '39.
 fj *LINCOLN IN THE WHITE HOUSE — Vita.—Feb. '39.
 f MAN-MADE ISLAND—Col.—WG July 29, '39.
 fj MARCH OF FREEDOM, THE—Univ.—May '39.
 f *MARCH OF TIME No. 6, THE (Series 5)—RKO—Feb. '39.

- fj *MARCH OF TIME No. 7, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—Mar. '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 8, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—Apr. '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 9, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—May '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 10, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—June '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 11, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—WG June 10, '39.
- f MARCH OF TIME No. 12, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—WG July 8, '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 13, THE (Series 5)—
RKO—Oct. '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 1, THE (Series 6)—
RKO—Nov. '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 2, THE (Series 6)—
RKO—Nov. '39.
- f MARCH OF TIME No. 3, THE (Series 6)—
RKO—Dec. '39.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 4, THE (Series 6)—
RKO—Jan. '40.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 5, THE (Series 6)—
RKO—Jan. '40.
- fj MARINE CIRCUS—Metro—Apr. '39.
- f MASTER'S TOUCH, THE—Vita.—Apr. '39.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 3 — Vita.—
Apr. '39.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 4 — Vita.—
June '39.
- fj MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 5 — Vita.—
WG June 10, '39.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 6 — Vita.—
Oct. '39.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 1 (Color Pa-
rade)—Vita.—Nov. '39.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 2 — Vita.—
WG Dec. 30, '39.
- f MED KANOT TILL LAPPLANDS FJALL—
Scan.—Mar. '39.
- f MED SOMMARBARN PA SOMMARGARD—
Scan.—Apr. '39.
- fj MEXICO—Para.—Feb. '39.
- f MIRACLE AT LOURDES—Metro—Jan. '40.
- f MODERN METHODS—Vita.—WG July 29, '39.
- f MONEY TO LOAN—Metro—Apr. '39.
- f MONROE DOCTRINE—Vita.—Nov. '39.
- fj MOROCCO—Col.—Nov. '39.
- fj MYSTIC SIAM—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
- f NATURAL WONDERS OF WASHINGTON
STATE—Metro—Nov. '39.
- fj NAVY CHAMPIONS—Col.—May '39.
- f NEVADA UNLIMITED—RKO—Nov. '39.
- fj NEW ROADWAYS—Metro—Feb. '39.
- f NEWSREEL—RKO—Feb. '39.
- fj *NINTH STATE, THE—Yorke—Nov. '29.
- fj ODD SPORTS—Col.—May '39.
- f OLD HICKORY—Vita.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
- f OLD NACHEZ ON THE MISSISSIPPI—Metro
—WG Dec. 30, '39.
- f ON THE WING—RKO—Feb. '39.
- f ONE AGAINST THE WORLD—Metro—Nov. '39.
- f ONE DAY STAND—Vita.—Oct. '39.
- f PACK TRIP—RKO—Oct. '39.
- fj PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 3 — Para.—
Feb. '39.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 7 — Para.—
Mar. '39.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 8 — Para.—
Mar. '39.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 9 — Para.—
May '39.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 10 — Para.—
June '39.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 11 — Para.—
WG June 24, '39.
- fj PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 12 — Para.—
WG July 1, '39.
- f PERU—Para.—Nov. '39.
- fj PICTURESQUE UDAIPUR—Metro—June '39.
- fj PILOT BOAT—RKO—Feb. '39.
- fj *POETRY OF NATURE—Metro—WG July 15, '39.
- fj POINTS ON POINTERS—Vita.—Mar. '39.
- f POUND FOOLISH—Metro—WG Dec. 30, '39.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 3—Para.—May '39.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 4—Para.—Mar. '39.
- fj POPULAR SCIENCE No. 5—Para.—June '39.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 6—Para. — WG July
15, '39.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 1—Para.—Nov. '39.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 2—Para.—Jan. '40.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 3—Para.—Jan. '40.
- fj *PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR — Metro—June
'39.
- fj *PUBLIC HOBBY NUMBER ONE—Para.—Nov.
'39.
- f QUAIN ST. AUGUSTINE—Metro—Dec. '39.
- f RADIO HAMS—Metro—June '39.
- f REPUBLIC OF PANAMA—Para.—Mar. '39.
- f RIDING THE CREST—RKO—WG July 15, '39.
- f ROAMING CAMERA No. 1, THE—Vita.—May
'39.
- f ROMANCE IN COLOR—Vita.—Oct. '39.
- fj ROMANCE OF THE POTATO—Metro.—Jan.
'40.
- fj RURAL HUNGARY—Metro—June '39.
- fj SAND HOGS—20th Cent.—June '39.
- fj *SET 'EM UP—Metro—Nov. '39.
- f SHOOTING FOR PAR—20th Cent.—Feb. '39.
- f SILVER—Scan.—Mar. '39.
- fj SKI BIRDS—Metro—Dec. '39.
- f *SKY FIGHTERS—20th Cent.—Jan. '40.
- f SMOOTH APPROACH—RKO—June '39.
- f SNOW FALLS—RKO—June '39.
- fj SOJOURN IN INDIA—Col.—Oct. '39.
- f SOLDIERS OF THE SEA—RKO—June '39.
- fj *SONS OF LIBERTY—Vita.—June '39.
- f SPELEN I SPANGA—Scan.—Dec. '39.
- fj SPORTS IMMORTALS—20th Cent.—WG June
24, '39.
- f SPORTING IRISH, THE—Para.—Mar. '39.
- f SPORTING WINGS—RKO—Apr. '39.
- f STORMANNABRUK—Scan.—Mar. '39.
- f *STORY OF ALFRED NOBEL, THE—Metro—
Mar. '39.
- fj STORY OF DR. JENNER, THE—Metro—Apr.
'39.
- fj *STORY THAT COULDN'T BE PRINTED, THE
—Metro—WG July 22, '39.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 59 — Univ.
—Mar. '39.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 60 — Univ.
—Mar. '39.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 61 — Univ.
—Mar. '39.
- fj STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 62 — Univ.
—May '39.
- fj STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 63 — Univ.
—May '39.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 64 — Univ.
—WG June 17, '39.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 65 — Univ.
—WG June 17, '39.

- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 66 — Univ. —Nov. '39.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 67 — Univ. —Nov. '39.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 69 — Univ. —Dec. '39.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 70 — Univ. —Dec. '39.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 71 — Univ. —Dec. '39.
 fj SWANS—Para.—May '39.
 f SWORD FISHING—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 f TAKE A CUE—Metro—Oct. '39.
 f TECHNIQUE OF TENNIS—Col.—WG June 24, '39.
 f TELEVISION—RKO—WG June 10, '39.
 fj *TEMPEST OVER TUNIS—20th Cent. — WG June 17, '39.
 f THAT'S AFRICA—Para.—Mar. '39.
 fj THERE GOES RUSTY—Col.—WG July 29, '39.
 f THINK FIRST—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f TOUCHDOWN REVIEW—Para.—Jan. '40.
 f *UNSEEN GUARDIAN—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 4—Para.—Feb. '39.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 5—Para.—May '39.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 6—Para.—WG June 24, '39.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 1—Para.—Dec. '39.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 2—Para.—Jan. '40.
 f VALIANT VENEZUELA—Metro.—Dec. '39.
 fj VIKING TRAIL, THE—20th Cent.—Mar. '39.
 f VINTER SEMESTER—Scan.—May '39.
 f WARNING, THE—Alli.—Nov. '39.
 f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 1, THE — Col.—Feb. '39.
 f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 2, THE — Col.—Mar. '39.
 f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 3, THE — Col.—WG June 24, '39.
 f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 1, (1939-40 series) —Col.—Jan. '40.
 fj WATCH YOUR STEP—Para.—WG July 1, '39.
 fj WEATHER WIZARDS—Metro—May '39.
 f WHILE AMERICA SLEEPS—Metro—May '39.
 f WINTER PLAYGROUND—RKO—Dec. '39.
 fj WORLD OF TOMORROW, THE — RKO — WG July 22, '39.
 fj *YANKEE DOODLE GOES TO TOWN—Metro—WG July 15, '39.
 fj YOUTH IN THE SADDLE—20th Cent. — WG July 29, '39.
 fj *ZOO—RKO—WG July 29, '39.

MUSICALS

- f ARTIE SHAW'S CLASS IN SWING — Para.—Nov. '39.
 f BLUE DANUBE, THE—Para.—Nov. '39.
 f BOY MEETS JOY—Univ.—Oct. '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 3 (3rd series) — Col.—Feb. '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 4—Col.—Feb. '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 8—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 9—Col. — WG July 8, '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 1—Col.—Dec. '39.

- f COMMUNITY SING No. 2—Col.—WG Dec. '39.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 3—Col.—WG Dec. '39.
 f DREAM OF LOVE, A—Metro—Mar. '39.
 f FAREWELL VIENNA—Para.—WG July 1, '39.
 f HERE'S HAL—Para.—Jan. '40.
 f HOAGY CARMICHAEL—Para.—June '39.
 f MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR — Para.—Dec. '39.
 f MR. AND MRS. JESSE CRAWFORD AT HOME—Vita.—May '39.
 f MUSIC THROUGH THE YEARS—Para.—Feb. '39.
 f ORGAN NOVELTY, AN—Vita.—WG Dec. '39.
 f RHUMBA RHYTHM—Metro—Nov. '39.
 f SAMOVAR SERENADE—RKO—Feb. '39.
 f SWING HOTEL—Univ.—Dec. '39.
 fj SWINGUET—RKO—WG July 15, '39.
 f TED FIO-RITO AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Para.—Nov. '39.
 f TROPICAL TOPICS—RKO—Feb. '39.
 f WILLIAM TELL—Para.—Dec. '39.

NOVELTIES

- f BUSY LITTLE BEARS—Para.—Dec. '39.
 f CHAINED—Vita.—May '39.
 f CIRCUS CO-ED—Para.—Mar. '39.
 f DEAN OF THE PASTEBOARDS—Vita.—June '39.
 f *FASHION FORECASTS No. 3 — 20th Cent.—May '39.
 f FASHION FORECASTS No. 4 — 20th Cent.—WG July 15, '39.
 f FASHION FORECASTS No. 5 — 20th Cent.—Nov. '39.
 f FASHION FORECASTS No. 6 — 20th Cent.—WG Dec. 30, '39.
 fj FIVE TIMES FIVE—RKO—WG July 8, '39.
 f HIGH PERIL—Vita.—Mar. '39.
 f ICE FROLICS—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 f MINUTE FROM DEATH, A—Vita.—Apr. '39.
 f MUSCLE MAULERS—20th Cent.—May '39.
 f RIDE, COWBOY, RIDE—Vita.—Nov. '39.
 f ROLLIN' IN RHYTHM—Vita.—May '39.
 fj SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 4—Col.—Feb. '39.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 5—Col.—Mar. '39.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 6—Col.—Apr. '39.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 7—Col.—June '39.
 fj SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 8—Col.—WG June 10, '39.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 10—Col.—WG July 8, '39.
 f *SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 12—Col.—WG July 29, '39.
 f *SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 1 (Series 19)—Col.—Dec. '39.
 fj SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 2—Col.—Jan. '40.
 f VERGE OF DISASTER—Vita.—Oct. '39.
 f VODOO FIRES—Vita.—June '39.
 f WITNESS TROUBLE—Vita.—WG July 29, '39.

SERIALS

- fj DICK TRACY'S G-MEN No. 1-15—Rep.—Oct-Dec. '39.
 fj LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE, No. 1-15 —Univ.—Mar. June '39.
 fj SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE No. 9-12—Univ.—Feb. '39.
 fj ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION No. 1—Rep.—Dec. '39.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 6



September, 1940



The Gallup Poll on
Double Features

Trends in the Use of Educational
Motion Pictures

Films at the New York
World's Fair

*Published monthly except June, July, and August by
the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Inc.*

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

From May 18th to August 17th, 1940

Features

- fj ALDRICH FAMILY IN LIFE WITH HENRY, THE—Jackie Cooper, Leila Ernst. Original screen story by Clifford Goldsmith and Don Hartman. Directed by Jay Theodore Reed. A humorous story of Henry Aldrich, showing how he earns money to join a group of boys who are going to Alaska. Paramount.
- m *ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO—Bette Davis, Charles Boyer. Based on the novel by Rachel Field. Directed by Anatole Litvak. A long and moving adaptation of Rachel Field's popular novel, concentrating on the frustrated love of a French duke for his children's governess and culminating in tragedy for them both. Is well produced and well cast, developing its theme slowly and extracting the maximum of poignant feeling from every situation. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Warner Bros.
- f ANDY HARDY MEETS DEBUTANTE—Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker. Based on the characters created by Auranía Rouveroi. Directed by George B. Seitz. Another episode in the life of Andy Hardy. Light and amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f ANNE OF WINDY POPLARS—Anne Shirley, James Ellison. Based on the novel by L. M. Montgomery. Directed by Jack Hively. The once-popular "Anne" tales are drawn on here for a story about a young schoolmistress who arrives in a hard-bitten community which is ruled with a rod of iron by an old-established family. Her fight against their domination is told slowly and sympathetically. Apt to be found too old-fashioned by the present generation. RKO Radio.
- f *BOOM TOWN—Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Claudette Colbert, Hedy Lamarr. Based on the story "A Lady Comes to Burkburnett" by James Edward Grant. Directed by Jack Conway. Pals, partners, rivals, enemies, pals and partners again—Gable and Tracy go through the ups and downs of the oil business, from wild-catting to fortune to new starts, and with two women both in love with one of them. Vivid and vigorous, and some swell stuff in the oil fields. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f BOYS FROM SYRACUSE—Allan Jones, Martha Raye, Joe Penner, Charles Butterworth. Based on the stage play by George Abbott. Directed by A. Edward Sutherland. A hilarious comedy of life in ancient Greece modernized. All about two brothers who have twin servants and what happens to them. Univ.
- f BROTHER ORCHID—Edward G. Robinson, Ann Sothorn. Based on the magazine story by Richard Connell. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. A gangster comedy. Once the leader of a gang but dethroned by his lieutenant and shot, Edward G. Robinson finds sanctuary in a monastery and there learns of brotherly love and service. Most entertaining with clever dialogue. Warner Bros.
- f CAPTAIN CAUTION — Victor Mature, Louise Platt. Based on the novel by Kenneth Roberts. Directed by Richard Wallace. The adventures of the crew of an American ship in the War of 1812. Led by a fiery young woman, who declares undying hatred of the English when they kill her sailor-father, they come up against plenty of sea-fighting and internal intrigue. The usual triangle romance ensues on shipboard, but is swept along in exciting adventures and battles. United Artists.
- f CAPTAIN IS A LADY, THE—Charles Coburn, Beulah Bondi. Based on the play, "Old Lady 31." Directed by Robert B. Sinclair. A most amusing story of an old retired sea captain who goes with his wife to live in an old ladies' home, and his rebellion against circumstances. The entire cast is excellent. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f CAROLINA MOON—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette. Original screen story by Connie Lee. Directed by Frank McDonald. A typical Autry picture with songs, with the cowboy giving a helping hand to a Southern family in danger of losing their plantation. A Western in all but setting. Republic.
- f COMIN' 'ROUND THE MOUNTAIN—Bob Burns, Una Merkel, Jerry Colonna. "Uncle Ezra." Based on a story by Lewis R. Foster. Directed by George Archainbaud. A thoroughly farcical story about a comic-strip bunch of hillbillies who manage to stop feuding long enough to oust the crooked maver of the town

(Continued on page 17)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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September 1940

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What Dr. Gallup Found Out

THE GALLUP POLL is a good deal of a mystery to people generally. Who has ever been, or met, one of the "samples" from whom its opinions are derived? But it is a kind of oracle, which has been so nearly right so often that actual money has been known to be wagered on its findings, and what its recent survey, made during a week in July, reveals about movie audience preferences on the question of double bills, deserves the careful consideration of anyone interested in that hotly debated problem. Producers and exhibitors of motion pictures may reasonably be supposed to have given the problem a pretty thorough study in their own behalf, not for a week but for years, since what people care to pay money for at the box-office is highly important to their jobs and investments, and it isn't unfair to presume that they have found double feature shows more popular than single feature shows, since double features are more the rule than the exception. Does the Gallup Poll show the producers and exhibitors wrong in their estimate of public preferences?

Headlining a 57 to 43 vote in favor of single features seems to indicate a definite attitude, but it is somewhat misleading. The vote is far from overwhelming, and a glance at the sub-divisions of the voting and at some of the Institute's supplementary conclusions shows that another kind of investigation might have arrived at quite different numerical statistics.

For one thing, the vote for single features was largely given by adults and people with

better than a low income. At the risk of generalizing too carelessly, that would mean that single features were preferred by people with mature tastes and by people with enough money to spend for other amusements than movies when they wanted to. But how much does that mean in terms of numbers actually buying tickets at the box-office when you consider two other facts that Dr. Gallup has arrived at: that "more than 60 per cent of the theatre admissions each week throughout the nation are accounted for by persons under 30 years of age," and that "an estimated total of 32 million persons, financially able to attend pictures frequently, actually go less than once a month"? It would be enlightening if Dr. Gallup could have found out how many of that 60 per cent of the movie audiences are adults. It would have been helpful to the practical business of movie showing if a person who went to movies once a week were given four votes as against the one vote of a person who went only once a month.

Another element, that of what are called "poor pictures," enters importantly into Dr. Gallup's reckonings. He finds that 66 per cent would favor double bills if both features in a double bill were good—a bit more nearly overwhelming than 57 to 43. Is there any way of finding out what "good" pictures are? Even your friends won't tell you, with any real unanimity. How can you know?

It appears, balancing up these rather indeterminate figures as well as one can, that double features are not really on their way out. As Dr. Gallup says, "theatre owners

have long known that most people say they prefer single features; yet when individual exhibitors have changed from a double to a single policy, their business has declined."

Some of the most articulate and sincere objections to double bills are from those who are thinking of children, and what they most object to is that one picture they call "good" is so often coupled with one they call "bad." That, of course, is a problem many communities have solved. They have arranged, in a perfectly amicable way, with the owner of the theatre that depends on their patronage, to have two "suitable" pictures shown on the same bill on the days when young people make up a large part of the audience. That is a practical method which may take initiative and vociferation to put into effect, but it can operate locally in satisfactory fashion, and efforts to bring it about are much more likely to succeed than passing resolutions about the evils of double features. For, human nature being what it is, most of us want to get the most we can for our money. How

many people do you suppose there are who take the trouble to find out just when the picture they want to see begins, and when it is finished walk out?

Dr. Gallup offers one conclusion which must be noted. He says that "only by making pictures of greater appeal to those people who have sufficient money and who could attend theatres more often can the revenues of the industry be materially increased; and it is precisely these people in the higher age and income levels who register the greatest opposition to double features." But isn't this precisely what the larger part of the picture industry has been trying to do? Anybody with pre-vision enough to tell accurately what this "greater appeal" is could command any salary he could dream of. And if every picture made were a generally acknowledged masterpiece, how many people would give up their other amusements, or even just the pleasure of staying quietly at home, to go and see it? J.S.H.

The Gallup Poll on Double Features

(From the report made public on August 8th, of the poll made by the American Institute of Public Opinion, of which Dr. George Gallup is the director, on the preferences of movie-goers regarding single and double feature programs.)

The American public by a vote of 57-43 casts its lot against double-bill motion picture programs—a topic of heated debate in American homes for the last decade or more.

This fact is revealed in a survey conducted by the Institute to determine just what the men, women and children in all the 48 states of the country think about the much-discussed problem of double bills. The cross-section of the population used in the study was especially drawn up to include children down to the age of six, since a substantial portion of motion picture audiences is composed of minors. The question put to persons included in the survey was:

"Would you rather go to a motion picture theatre showing a single feature or to one showing a double feature?"

The vote of all groups is:

For Single Features 57%

For Double Features 43

The reason most frequently given for those opposing double bills, in order of importance, are: (1) that either one or both of the features is likely to be a "poor" picture; (2) that sitting through a double feature is fatiguing and takes too much time; and (3) that seeing two full-length pictures is confusing because, as one woman put it, "You generally think about a picture when you get home and a double feature gets you mixed up."

Those who like double features give as their chief reasons: (1) that a double bill gives movie-goers more for their money; (2) if one picture is inferior, the other is likely to be good and in any event adds variety; and (3) a double feature gives those who attend a chance to "kill more time."

The importance of "poor pictures" as a reason for opposing double bills is established by another question included in the study. People were asked whether they would change their attitude toward double feature programs if both pictures in a double bill

were good. When this qualification is added, the vote for double features become a majority—66 per cent, to 34 per cent opposed.

One interesting fact brought to light by the survey is a sharp difference of opinion on double features between persons under 18 years of age and persons over 18. Likewise there is a wide difference in attitude between persons in the higher income group and those in the lower income group.

In general, the double feature is popular among persons under 18 years and among persons in the lower income level, as the following tables show:

AGE GROUPS		
	FOR SINGLE FEATURES	FOR DOUBLE FEATURES
Aged 6 to 12	23%	77%
Aged 12 to 17	52	58
Aged 18 to 24	60	40
Aged 24 and over.....	68	32
INCOME GROUPS		
Upper Income Group...	75%	25%
Middle Income Group	63	37
Lower Income Group...	47	53
On Relief	42	58

The result of the poll by sections of the country is as follows:

	FOR SINGLE FEATURES	FOR DOUBLE FEATURES
New England	43%	57%
Middle Atlantic	55	45
East Central	62	38
West Central	57	43
South	58	42
Rocky Mountains	62	33
Pacific Coast	56	44

There is little difference in the attitudes of the sexes on this question, males voting 56% for single features and 44% for double features, and females voting 58% for single features and 42% for double features.

Poll Your Own

WE suggest that a poll in your community might be interesting and enlightening. Certainly people everywhere are heard expressing their opinions, pro and con

National Board of Review Annual Conference November 14th-16th, 1940

AS announced in the last issue of the Magazine the National Board of Review is planning to hold its Seventeenth Annual Conference in the Fall. This is after sixteen years of mid-winter Conferences and the change has been made only after careful consultation with our readers and leaders of motion picture councils, nearly all of whom agreed with us that a Fall date would be more satisfactory.

The dates are Thursday through Saturday, November 14th to 16th; the place, the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. We hope that you will show by your attendance that we were right in changing the date. A varied program has been planned, one that will appeal to all motion picture group leaders and to everyone interested in the motion picture. Come for the discussions, the talks, the screenings, the junior session, and to meet and chat informally with the many others who share your interests.

More about the Conference will reach you in our next issue, but make your plans now for this important mid-November meeting.

Summer Guide to Selected Pictures

IN this issue we publish a complete list of the pictures selected by the National Board during the summer months. It has not been our custom to do so in the past as any pictures missing from the pages of the Magazine at the end of the year could always be found in the Annual Catalog. Now that we have ceased to publish the Annual Catalog, the Magazine will contain all lists of selected pictures and, at the end of the year, its issues will be a useful and complete guide to better films. See page 2.

the double feature. Why not secure a recording of these opinions in your organization? It would prove popular and useful and the National Board of Review would be happy to receive your results for publication.

Trends in the Use of Educational Motion Pictures

By W. W. WHITTINGHILL

Mr. Whittinghill is Director of the Department of Visual and Radio Education, Detroit Board of Education, and President of the Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council. This address, delivered at the February 1940 Conference of the National Board of Review, appears in this Fall issue since at that time especial interest is centered upon the use of motion pictures in the schools).

THE motion picture industry has a potential 130,000,000 critics in the United States, and some 18,000 theatres in 9,000 cities. The activities and responsibilities of the National Board of Review are directly related to the use of motion pictures shown in these theatres and seen by large audiences each week. It is also true that the Public School system in the United States have a potential 30,000,000 critics in actual enrollment and perhaps another 100,000,000 potential critics at large. The 30,000,000 critics are housed in approximately 250,000 school buildings located in every city, village, town and rural district, under the direction of approximately 1,000,000 teachers. These data are fundamental and of paramount importance to our present existing social structures in the United States. The program of motion pictures in the theatres, the allied program of the National Board of Review, and the program involving the use of educational motion pictures in the public schools are somewhat comparable in scope and, generally speaking, are for the same audiences some of the time. There is of course a difference in the frequency of attendance and the procedures of operation. The programs offered and directed in the theatre are not required or compulsory on the part of any audience. The audiences pay before entering the theatre. The programs directed and offered in the schools are required and somewhat compulsory for the audiences. The audiences sometimes pay before entering the schools and occasionally have to pay when they leave. We probably should study also the direct relationship that Radio Programs now have created with regard to the so-called 130,000,000 critics. This network of public relations is larger than its components.

Before discussing the specific subject of the

day, I should like briefly to describe the activity programs directed by the Department of Visual and Radio Education. This information will give a more comprehensive plan of the related activities and will help to interpret that phase of the work involving motion pictures.

The present Department of Visual and Radio Education includes three major divisions — Visual Section — Radio Section — Children's Museum Section. This Department is one of ten departments in the Division of Instruction, College of Education, Wayne University. The personnel in the Division of Instruction are responsible, in co-operation with all divisions of the system, for the program of instruction. These people prepare courses of study, select text books, and direct a part of the teacher education program. It is this same personnel who work with us in carrying out the program of Visual and Radio Education. The activities directed by the Department are:

Visual Section

Teacher training; Teaching Aids Catalog; Selection of Teaching Aids; Film Program; Slide Program; Phonograph Record Program; Delivery Program; Service Program; Equipment Program; Exhibit Program; Photographic Program; Public Relations Program; Research Investigations.

Children's Museum Section

Lending Service; Docent Service; Inspection and Preservation of Exhibits; Records.

Radio Section

Preparation of Radio Scripts and Continuities; Rehearsal of Students; Presentation of Radio Broadcasts.

"Trends in the Use of Educational Motion

Pictures" covers a period of several years. Many interesting episodes dot these paths of exploratory developments. Publications and consolidated records are available which give a cross-section report on the national program of Visual Education.

Statements or comments which are to follow will relate specifically to the use of educational motion pictures in the Detroit Public School System. These statements may also be considered as partially typifying the procedures followed in almost any school system, large or small, in the United States. The present enrollment in the Public Schools in Detroit is 283,482. This figure includes day and evening schools, and Wayne University.

* * *

Calling Dr. Millimeter—calling Dr. Millimeter—calling—the first 35mm. silent film to be used in the schools—Trends in the Use of Educational Motion Pictures—Trends of the Past—Trends of the Present—Trends of the Future—Trends presumably indicate progress better or worse than the program of the past, comparable to present programs, or programs with future positive potentialities.

What's happened? Some twenty-two years ago, in 1918, the use of educational motion pictures started in the Detroit Public Schools. At that time, six buildings were using silent 35mm. inflammable films. The films and projector were transported from building to building. A representative from the Department of Visual Education took the projector and films and operated them in school auditoriums. The films were rented from local film exchanges. The subject matter included news reels, travel pictures, historical short subjects, plant and animal life and, in all cases, the content of the films was dressed in "theatrical attire." From 1918 through 1923, the number of school buildings using films increased to approximately forty-five. The same mode of procedure was used relative to the use of equipment and the selection of films. The equipment was improved mechanically and the variety of film subject matter was greater. Several things happened during that period. A few may be described here. Reactions on the part of principals, teachers, children, and some members of society were voiced. Some of these reactions

were constructive, destructive, vitriolic, and perhaps dictatorial.

The general public was somewhat skeptical from the point of view of fads and frills and the cost of the programs. A few films caught fire and created a small panic among the pupils looking on and the teachers. Following these experiences, it was necessary to have fireproof motion picture booths constructed in school auditoriums. The booths met the requirements of the City codes and from that time to the present, 35mm. films have been projected from motion picture booths comparable to those in the theatres.

In 1924, many different calls and demands were made on Dr. Millimeter. These questions concerned subject matter and its relationship to the courses of study and textbooks—the general curriculum. Were the films which had been rented and used in the schools a vital part of the instructional program? Was the transportation of equipment expensive? Were the teachers trained? What type of film was best suited to the local programs? Should all available films be used or should there be a definite selection? Should films produced for commercial firms be used in the schools? Should theatrical feature films and comedies be used?

Briefly, this is what happened from 1925 to 1929. A film rating card was devised and given to principals and teachers so that they could voice their opinions concerning the suitability of subject matter. Motion picture projectors were placed in the school buildings as permanent equipment. The purchase of films was started and a Board of Education library was established to supplement those films which were rented. Teachers began to use films which were more directly related to the program of instruction. A definite teacher training program was placed in operation. Demonstrations in actual teaching situations were presented. Principals and teachers had an opportunity to see how educational motion pictures could supplement and enrich the program of instruction. Teacher training courses were also offered for the teachers. One more development occurred but did not last long. A theatrical feature film and comedy were shown in a high school auditorium. A protest was filed by

the manager of a community theatre located near the school. From that date, a policy was declared to be in operation which read, "Theatrical feature films and comedies are not to be shown in the Public Schools." The policy is still effective.

From 1930 to 1939, we have carried on many programs of experimentation relating to equipment and educational motion pictures. With the advent of the sound film the disc and projector were checked carefully, perhaps in a comparable manner to that followed by the theatres. The Board of Education did not purchase this type of equipment. During this period, 16mm. silent projectors were purchased for practically all buildings. The Public Schools are now using 16mm. sound motion pictures experimentally. From the results of this experiment, and with sufficient funds available, this program will be extended throughout the system. Then followed an evaluation of the past programs, with regard to both equipment and films. Producers of educational motion pictures really launched a production program of subjects specifically suited for school use. Equipment manufacturers presented projectors adapted to the schools. Public school systems now have special departments of Visual Education to manage this program of motion pictures in a business-like way. Libraries of educational films are now owned by many school systems and universities. These institutions serve the schools. Many divisions of government and many industrial organizations have produced films suitable for use in the schools.

Use of educational motion pictures in the Detroit Public Schools is definite. The following information is a brief résumé of the organization and procedure:

The Department of Visual Education was organized in the year 1918.

The present, or 1940, program of motion pictures is as follows:

PART I.

To work cooperatively with the motion picture industry in carrying out that phase of motion picture work in which the Public Schools should participate.

To work cooperatively with the National

Board of Review in their program wherein the Public Schools may contribute.

To work cooperatively with the Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council in a program relating to the school and community.

To work cooperatively with other motion picture councils and educational institutions in promoting any program wherein the Public Schools may participate.

To work cooperatively with the producers of educational motion pictures.

To work cooperatively with the manufacturers of school motion picture equipment.

PART II.

Procedure in the Detroit Public School organization:

The policy governing the use of educational films in the Public Schools necessitates that films be previewed by instructional committees. These committees determine whether or not the film content will supplement or enrich the program of instruction. Those films which are approved are classified in a Department Catalog according to instructional departments and the catalog is issued to the schools. Courses of study also carry a classification according to units of subject matter. The use of films is voluntary.

To work cooperatively with all divisions of the school system. Principals, teachers, and faculty members of Wayne University are considered as participating members in the Department of Visual and Radio Education.

To select educational motion pictures which enrich the program of instruction.

To appraise and evaluate the use of educational motion pictures in the public schools.

To improve the program of educational motion pictures in the light of these data.

"Trends in the Use of Educational Motion Pictures" represents a large and complicated program of the Public Schools. Evidences indicate that the use of motion pictures gives reality to the pageant of human progress. The results and improvement of this program in the future will depend in a large part on the continued cooperation of the motion picture industry, the National Board of Review, the Public School Systems, and allied and affiliated organizations. So we march on with the time parade.

Films at the New York World's Fair

MORE than five hundred non-theatrical films are assembled at the World's Fair this year. Together they form a more varied collection of instructional subjects than probably have ever been collected before. They range in interest from travelogs, which cover practically every part of the world's surface and the people who live upon it, to specialized studies of the world's industries, medical developments, social conditions, and communications. The bulk of them are shorts and their quality is as varied as their material, combining much of the cream of documentaries with run-of-the-mill, matter-of-fact productions.

Whether good or bad these films seem to be attracting a steady flow of visitors. Their subject matter is probably one reason for their popularity—there seems to be no end to public interest in foreign lands, strange peoples, and the work of man and his machines. The second-rate film at the Fair is accepted with interest and, often, real pleasure, as though the artistry of the production mattered little by comparison with the scenes it reproduces. And there is a second, and very pointed reason for the popularity of *any* film production at the Fair, as most visitors will agree—the little theatres with their air-conditioned atmosphere and comfortable seats are a blessed change from the heat and glare of the avenues. Hot, tingling feet rest at last on a cool floor and tired eyes welcome with relief the waterfalls of New Zealand and the Greenbelt of the World of Tomorrow. Once subsided into cool darkness it takes all of a sixty-minute program to rest the limbs and restore ambitions to sight-see in the outside world.

So much for the casual visitor. But for those who go to the Fair set on seeing some of the better documentaries there is plenty to attract and satisfy them. The Little Theatre, for example, in the ever-popular Science and Education Building, makes its selections from some fifty films and fits them into daily-changing programs. These programs include such famous American documentaries as *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, *The City*, and

The River, selected March of Time studies of social topics, twelve medical films, and a selection of first-class British documentaries such as *Night Mail*, *The Transfer of Power*, *Monkey into Man*, *Man of Aran*, *North Sea*, and *Housing Problems*. Some twenty-three of the commercial exhibits run 16 and 35mm. reels on industrial and consumer subjects, most of them straightforward descriptive studies of their particular product, be it steel, oil, candy, or electricity, while others dress up the advertising in cartoon or comedy form.

The foreign pavilions—which supply the bulk of the Fair's films—have a number of shorts of high value. On occasion these foreign productions devote an interest and skill to their subject matter in such a way as to raise it well out of the average short level. The Belgium Pavilion, for instance, in one of its shorts makes a fascinating comparison between the human types found on the canvases of the old Flemish masters and contemporary Belgian men and women. Belgium, too, is responsible for the striking housing film, *Les Maisons de la Misere*, showing at the Little Theatre. The British Pavilion, which usually has a queue outside its theatre before every showing, has about one hundred and twenty-five shorts from which to build its daily changes of program, and probably rates a higher average in quality than any other theatre at the Fair. Its films include most of those British productions mentioned already as appearing at the Little Theatre, as well as such high-caliber favorites as *Song of Ceylon*, *Private Life of the Gannets*, *Shipyard*, *Squadron 992*, *London River*, *Men of Africa*, *Prelude to Flight*—titles which, though few, give some idea of the general scope of interest. Special afternoons are set aside for films dealing with the British Dominions and Colonies, and there is also a fairly up-to-date British newsreel shown daily. In the French pavilion you can cover the length and breadth of France and the French Colonial Empire and there is usually enough charm and beauty in the scenes to make up for the films' mixed quality. The same can be said of the Brazilian Pavilion with its

eighty-odd 16 and 35mm. studies of Brazilian cities, countryside and products. In general the foreign pavilions supply the widest range of film interest at the Fair, hampered though they are more often than not by commentaries which were spoken into the microphone in pre-blitzkrieg days. This is especially noticeable and moving in the French and Belgium pavilions, and in Czechoslovakia's solitary contribution to film entertainment: *The Rape of Czechoslovakia*.

For the benefit of those of our readers who intend to visit the Fair before its final closing at the end of October, we list below the various theatres and summaries of their programs. As all programs and dates are subject to change without notice this list cannot be accepted as final, but it will at least give the prospective visitor some idea of what has been planned and the breadth and scope of what the Fair has to offer in the way of films. Admission to theatres is free unless otherwise stated.

Court of States. Daily showing of travelogs from the States of Arkansas, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The New York City Building. Continuous daily showings of the activities of the following offices and departments of the City Administration—Board of Education, Civil Service, Correction, Comptroller, Fire, Higher Education, Medical Examiner, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Police, President Borough of Manhattan, Public Works, Sanitation, Weights and Measures; in all about twenty-five films, of 16mm. size.

WPA Building. (Federal Works Agency). About a dozen 35mm. films covering such subjects as housing, flood control, weather, highways, land reclamation etc., together with illustrations of the work of the WPA.

Little Theatre. (Science and Education Building.) A large and continually changing program of 35mm. shorts is shown here on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are devoted to films from the State of Texas. There are twelve medical films, certain of which are shown at 2:55 p.m., and a "feature" documentary, *The City*, which is shown twice daily except on the days of the Texas

showings. The remainder of the films are divided into fourteen programs under the heading "Life in Our Times." The following remain to be seen during September and October—

Program V. "Industry" (September 12-15; October 17-20) Industrial illness, machinery, mail service. Four films in all.

Program VI. "Food and the Consumer" (September 26-29) Four studies of problems in nutrition, food production and consumption.

Program IX. "Natural Science" (October 10-13) Studies of human and animal development, of the transfer of power and the forces exerted upon the earth's surface. Five films.

Program XI. "Films of American Life" (Special Labor Day Program: August 29-September 2). Selected films of appropriate nature taken from the general list.

Program XII. "Pan America." (September 19-22) Covers Canada, Brazil, Mexico with some four films.

Program XIII. "Peoples of the Earth." (October 3-16). Peasants and fisherman at home and abroad. Four films.

Program XIV. "Farming." (October 24-27). Five films dealing with rural electrification, the Great Plains, the sharecropper, and the U. S. farmer.

U. S. Government Building. Nine films of patriotic, administrative, or Pan-American interest.

Commercial Exhibits. The following companies and organizations are exhibiting short subjects on 16 and 35mm.—Aviation Building, Chrysler Motors Building, Consolidated Edison Building, Coty Exhibit Building, Du Pont Tower of Research, Eastman Kodak Building, Ford Motor Building, Greyhound Exhibit, Household Finance Corporation, Keystone Manufacturing Co., Lucky Strike Building, Maritime Commission, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., National Biscuit Co., Official Motion Picture Producers (Communications Building), Northwest Yeast Co., Petroleum Industry Exhibition, Planter's Peanut Exhibit, Railway Supply Industry, RCA Communications, Refreshments of the Fair Inc., U. S. Steel Building, Westinghouse Electric Co., Yale and Towne

Manufacturing Co. Certain of these films are accompanied by demonstrations.

Amusement Area. 16mm. silent revivals are shown every evening in a one hour program at the Opry House. There is a charge for admission.

Perisphere Auditorium in Theme Center. 70mm. color prints of the World of Tomorrow.

Foreign Exhibitors. Nine national pavilions show travelogs and documentaries concerning their countries and we list below the names of these pavilions and the nature of their productions.

Belgium Pavilion. Daily, 11 a. m. to 12 noon, and 2 p. m. to 7 p. m. Eight historical and educational films, 35mm., mostly travelogs.

Brazilian Pavilion. Daily, 2 p. m. to 7 p. m. Shows selections of some eighty films, 16 and 35mm. sound, dealing with a wide variety of subjects. Apart from many travelogs there are studies of Brazilian coffee-growing, industries, agriculture, gardens, wine-bottling, vineyards, wild-life, child education, tuberculosis prevention, water supply, medical care etc.

Canadian Pavilion. Daily, 2 p. m. to 8 p. m. About thirty films in 16 and 35mm. sound, nearly all travelogs covering most parts of Canada. Includes a few travelogs of New Zealand.

Czechoslovakian Pavilion. Daily, 2 p. m. to 8:30 p. m. One picture on the conquest of Czechoslovakia and one travelog. 16mm.

Dominican Pavilion. Irregular schedule. Two 16mm. color films, one educational, one travelog, silent.

Finnish Pavilion. Daily, except Monday, afternoon and evening. Twelve 16mm. travel, sport, and educational subjects.

French Pavilion. Daily from 2 p. m. to 7 p. m. A variety of films, all 35mm. sound; mostly travelogs covering all parts of France and the French Empire. Also selected French newsreels and studies of French industries, expeditions, tapestries, scientific experiments, and songs and dances of France. Ten cents admission charge for the benefit of the French War Relief.

British Pavilion. Films are shown throughout the day, continuously, from 11 a. m. to

8:30 p. m. with daily changes of program. A collection of roughly one hundred and twenty-five films, mostly English but including many from the Dominions and Colonies. Travelogs, documentaries, natural history studies, industrial and agricultural topics, studies of life at home and abroad within the Empire. All films are 35mm. sound, including British newsreels. There is a Dominion program daily at 3 p. m. Australia is represented on Monday and Saturday, Canada on Tuesday and Friday, New Zealand, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia on Thursday, New Zealand and Southern Rhodesia on alternate Sundays.

Switzerland Pavilion. Daily, from 3:30 p. m. to 7:30 p. m. Nine 16mm. films, sound and silent, travelogs and educational subjects.

Titles and descriptions of all films showing at the World's Fair are obtainable from American Film Center, Inc., 45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City at 10c a copy. We hope to be able to give you information in a forthcoming issue on the availability of many of these films for showings after the close of the Fair.

FOR the purpose of getting the best story on which to base a documentary motion picture, the Henry George School of Social Science and the Freeman Magazine, 30 East 29th Street, New York City, announce the following contest:

In an effort to present to the nation the values of citizenship in a free society as opposed to those of a collectivist State, prizes will be given for the best scenarios on the subject "Free Enterprise in a Free Society."

In order to give contestants adequate background for their stories the Henry George School of Social Science invites them to enroll in the fifteen weeks' free course in Fundamental Economics and International Trade beginning September 23 and ending January 8. Those living in New York City have the opportunity to attend class at the School one evening a week. Others may take the correspondence course, beginning any time. There are no charges of any kind.

The entries should not be submitted before

(Continued on page 13)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional and Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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The Summer Films

WHATEVER the reason, there seems to be no outstanding effect of world events on the movies that have been coming along since early summer. If propaganda against the Hitler idea and the Hitler method is on its way, it isn't yet sweeping the screens. Maybe the movie houses will go on being a fairly safe refuge from the headlines and the radio, for those who would rather escape for a bit from the news of battles.

There have been some frank and earnest pictures of Nazi terrorism, but they don't appear to be starting any cycle. You might think people know all they need to know about such things and have no more curiosity about them. Certainly there is little of that appetite for war horrors that was evident in 1916, and much more suspicion and scepticism toward propaganda.

The Mortal Storm is probably the most effective film about the Nazis. It knows whereof it tells, and is much more objective than emotional and argumentative. But it has all too familiar an air in the sort of things that make its plot—stuff of many a melodrama, which is convincing not in itself but because the audience brings to it a knowledge that fiction-like as it might seem it after all is essentially true. And my point is that many people don't care to be stirred by things they are likely to run into personally if they take a trip across the ocean—or merely around the corner, for that matter.

The best of the summer films—those people have liked best—have been mostly those

that got away from the present, or the familiar, or the prosy. There is *All This and Heaven Too*, crammed with tears and woe but all as far away as *East Lynne*. Why Bette Davis and Charles Boyer should be most beloved when they are most miserable is one of the mysteries of popular affections, but here they are, innocent victims of a most unhappy love affair in a France infinitely far from the present, suffering terribly without even a moment's reward of happiness. The "Heaven Too" is all left to the imagination. Of course it is ideally done for the kind of thing it is.

Pride and Prejudice goes even farther afield, back to the pre-Victorian small-town England of Jane Austen, but it is concerned with no greater woes than whether a mother of five daughters will manage to find husbands for them all. Though it is all concerned with marriage, sex is discreetly covered with voluminous petticoats, it is all presented in a key of comedy not too rarified, and the ultimate satisfaction of it comes from seeing common-sense triumph over silliness, just as it should in a Jane Austen story. The charm of the period is played up nicely, and there could hardly be two better people than Greer Garson and Laurence Olivier for the central figures.

Of a familiar American type is *They Drive By Night*, with the less familiar element of George Raft being noble without losing his toughness. It's about truck drivers and their dangerous life, at least half the way through, and then veers into a fairly sordid pursuit of Mr. Raft by a neurotic woman. This lady, who is one of the most convincingly unprincipled ladies known to the screen, gives Ida

Lupino her place in the sun, and we'll certainly be seeing more of her. Ann Sheridan is as competent as ever at self-defence in a rough and grabbing world of males, but here she is the good-pal type, who has only to wait to get her man. The picture has all the Warner Brothers' skill in fast, rowdy action, with many of the favorite Warner people in its cast.

Boom Town is also rough, and a literally four-star piece into the bargain. It goes back only so far as 1918, but that period, when oil began to make sudden fortunes and big-business battles, seems almost as remote as covered wagon days. Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy are vigorous figures against a colorful background, alternately pals and rivals and enemies and pals again, with Claudette Colbert in one of her more Griselda aspects of femininity, and Hedy Lamarr being exotic without being really dangerous. A virile picture, with some stirring episodes in the oil fields that re-create vivid scenes from America's adventurous past.

Our Town goes into America's past, too, not very far back but into days that the swift-moving world seems to have left behind. The town is in New Hampshire, its people ordinary village people, its events the simple business of growing up and marrying and dying. It is an extraordinary picture in many ways, of which its remarkable tenderness and insight and intimacy is perhaps the most extraordinary of all. A boy and girl go through high school, get married, settle on a farm and have children, and about them people grow up or grow old, some of them go away, some of them die. There are no more complications in their lives than might happen to anybody. For people who have memories of such a life it is one of the most moving pictures that have been put upon the screen, and everything about it, the writing, the directing, the acting, the music, the settings, could not imaginably be improved upon.

And there are good comedies—*My Favorite Wife*, *The Ghost Breakers*, *My Love Came Back*, *I Love You Again*, *The Great McGinty*—what more do you have to know about a comedy than that it makes you laugh and have a good time? One of them has Cary Grant, another William Powell and Myrna Loy together again: such things are

recommendations enough for any well-made bit of mirth.

March of Time, elaborating its now familiar practice of acquainting America with threatening elements beyond the seas, if not at home, has finished its first long film, *The Ramparts We Watch*. With the avowed purpose of finding out what we can learn from our experiences in the last war, it picks out what it believes to be a typical American town and follows it through the impacts of world events upon its people from 1914 till our finally entering ourselves into the struggle to save the world. It is an admirable re-creation of those days, partly by the use of old news reels, partly by a careful reproduction of the life of ordinary people as the news of other places came into contact with their own peaceful existence. Their home life, their amusements, the clothes they wore, the songs they sang, are very real. And the lesson of it—for its aim is definitely to present a lesson—is that we should be watchful of our ramparts. Just what those ramparts are, and how we can best watch them, it leaves rather indefinite. It comes under the general head of preparedness, and the details are something for wiser people than you or I or even March of Time to work out.

(Continued from page 11)

January 8, when the term closes. The contest closes February 15.

Manuscripts must be typewritten, and not longer than 1,000 words. Do not submit a continuity. Simply write out in synopsis form a story of what you believe represents "Free Enterprise in a Free Society." From time to time during the course you may get all the data that the School has available in the way of books, pamphlets, etc., for the preparation of your story. (No examinations).

First prize \$100, second prize \$25, third prize \$15, fourth prize \$10.

The winning scenario will be published in *The Freeman*, a monthly critical journal of social and economic affairs.

Address your enrollment and enquiries to: Scenario Contest Department, Henry George School of Social Science, 30 East 29th Street, New York, New York.

Comments on Council Activity

THE question is often asked how extensively the selected picture listing prepared by Motion Picture Councils and like groups is made available to the public. In a recent re-reading of the report of the community activities session of the last National Board Conference there seemed to be several good answers to this question and we print them below.

Mrs. Frank R. Anderson

President, Cleveland Cinema Club

We call our listing The Cleveland Cinema Club Bulletin. It is our purpose to aid Greater Cleveland in selecting fine motion picture entertainment. We have segregated or classified the pictures as to subject. We list them under such headings as "Thoughtful Drama", "With Emphasis on Music", "Westerns" and "Miscellaneous Light Entertainment." We rate them also as to whether they are for adults or children. The Bulletin is published five times during the club year and we try to impress upon people the titles of those pictures of each type that are worth seeing and remembering.

Mrs. Samuel B. Cuthbert, past

Motion Picture Chairman, Allegheny County, Pa., Federation of Women's Clubs

The Pittsburgh Press gives us free space each Friday for the list of theatres showing family pictures for Saturday morning. We have a Publicity Committee that contacts the theatres. This Committee calls the theatres, gets their booking for Saturday, and if they are showing family pictures they are in this list in the Pittsburgh Press. It has made the managers all the more careful in their Saturday booking of family pictures because they do not want the theatre across the street to be listed and not themselves.

Mrs. Robert E. Griebel

Vice-Chairman, Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn

We have an Editorial Committee meeting

every Monday morning. It has grown from a group of four to fifteen or eighteen. At that time we evaluate the pictures for our programs, which are sent out every two weeks. Besides these résumés that go to all members and to the various organizations, including the schools, there is a listing in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, ten or eleven inches of free space given every Friday evening, listing the films for the adult and family classifications along with a short description and the names of the theatres at which they are being shown.

Mrs. W. L. Gilbert

Motion Picture Chairman, New Century Club, Schoharie County, N. Y.

Some six years ago I made my first trip to a National Board Conference. I went home very much enthused and decided that it would be good to get a list of recommended pictures into our newspaper. At that time we had three papers in our county. The National Board helped me with the plan, which was entirely new to me. Today we have five newspapers with a list of picture evaluations. Our county is a small one without any cities and the population in our villages is from 1,000 to 3,500. There are six theatres in the county. There was a little hesitation in one community on the part of the theatre manager. But, finally, he was told by another manager that it would be better to accept listings. "Because," he said, "really these women do a fine piece of work. You may resent that list in the paper but people like it and they want it. I believe they are going by it."

Mrs. Curtice N. Hitchcock

Executive Committee, Schools Motion Picture Committee, New York City

The main job of the Schools Motion Picture Committee in New York is previewing pictures and recommending whole programs for week-end showing in New York theatres. The previewing is done in conjunction with

the National Board of Review. We recommend pictures for Saturdays, Sundays and holidays only when the whole program can be recommended—including the shorts, news-reels, and even the trailers. Sometimes trailers can be pretty objectionable.

We have succeeded in getting a great deal of publicity for these lists. They are published in several daily papers every week, in "Cue" magazine, in the bulletin of the Parents' League, and in a good many other school and official bulletins of one sort or another. The libraries of New York cooperate in having our lists there for reference, and we also receive help from them in getting the opinion of the children librarians on certain pictures. Those who do the reviewing are parents of children between the ages of approximately ten to fourteen. This is the age that we cover. When we are doubtful we call in people whose work with children is perhaps more expert. The Bureau of Child Guidance has been very nice in cooperating with us. They find our lists useful, and we find their assistance in the reviewing of pictures extremely useful, as well as the advice of the librarians. We are sufficiently represented in the daily press and magazines to make us feel that a great many people are using our lists to very good effect.

Mrs. Charles T. Owens

President, Philadelphia Motion Picture Forum

We have a printed outline of our objectives and a "Guide to Motion Picture Entertainment" in pamphlet form. We stress especially pictures that we think would not otherwise be box office successes. We print 6,000 of these pamphlets which we give out nine months of the year. We have decided to include little notices advising when the National Board of Review Conference is going to meet, and items of that sort. These will go at the bottom of the Guide. Our Guides have been requested by the Engineers Club and the Central City Business Center Club. We women really depend on them regularly, but when the men ask for five hundred to give out at their meetings, we think that is recognition indeed!

THE form of meetings held by different Motion Picture Councils, both general meetings and study classes, is another questioned point to which answer can be found in the Conference reportings, as the following excerpts show:

Mrs. Clarence Echols

Director, Dallas Motion Picture Council

There is a distinction between being interested in motion pictures and being interested in motion picture work. Motion pictures are primarily entertainment, and one may be simply interested in a good piece of entertainment and stop at that. However, being interested in motion picture work means taking an active part in all of the activities directed toward better pictures.

With that in mind our Motion Picture Council in Dallas endeavors to give information to the various groups who visit us from month to month. We are carrying out a plan this year which we find very successful. Our meetings last from 10:30 to 12:00. The first hour is devoted to business. We have a Preview Committee whose members are always present at these meetings. Each of these members tells of the outstanding picture which she has previewed.

Two representatives each month from clubs in Dallas are invited to bring their groups to these meetings. Consequently, before the year is over we have had about all of the important clubs. Sometimes if the group is not going to be large enough we ask three or four different groups at one time.

Our recording secretary takes notes of these meetings which she reads at the next meeting, so that not only those who were present when the pictures are commented upon hear about them, but also those present the following month.

We have a lecture system that is most helpful and interesting. The lecture is given at 11:30, when our business is over, and runs until 12:00. We have some outstanding speaker who has been invited to talk on a certain subject. "The Influence of Talking Pictures on Present Day Speech" was presented by the head of the English Department at Southern Methodist University. We had so many requests for his talk that one hundred

copies were made and distributed. Or we have a teacher to speak on "The Artistic Values of Motion Pictures", and following that a representative from the Interstate Theatres who speaks on "Box Office Values." We feel that we have something interesting in these talks for our members and guests.

Mrs. Charles W. Swift

President, Elmira, (N. Y.) Better Films Council

Once a month we have a meeting for general information. Then, there are committee chairmen who carry on the different phases of work in the city throughout the month. That makes it much easier than if we had a system of more general meetings.

We observed a Motion Picture Week in April, in which the schools, the clubs, libraries and stores participated. This was our second Motion Picture Week and we found that people were more enthusiastic than ever to see what motion pictures had done for us in many fields.

We celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of Motion Pictures by bringing Dr. William Lewin to help enthuse the English teachers about photoplay appreciation in the schools. Now we have well established photoplay appreciation classes in all of our high schools. We have two new Cinema Clubs, a Junior and a Senior, which are doing fine work as an extra-curricular activity. These Clubs distribute throughout the schools information about the pictures that are worth seeing. They have bulletin boards in the main hallway where they place stills and information so that all students have a chance to learn about the pictures, even though they do not belong to the Cinema Clubs. A Camera Club is cooperating with the Cinema Club in making a motion picture for which they will write the script and supply the actors.

Once a year we bring a foreign picture to Elmira, something which would otherwise not be shown there, and we have it at a little theatre.

We are planning to bring for one day many of the outstanding pictures, like *David Copperfield*, *Robin Hood*, *A Tale of Two*

Cities, with a program of good shorts, including one of the Warner historical shorts, such as *The Bill of Rights*, or *The Declaration of Independence*, and many others which we feel should be preserved for future use, especially in the schools. These programs are going to be sponsored by the Parent-Teacher groups, therefore each school will benefit from that, and each school P.-T. A. will benefit by the performance. They all have to earn money some way in order to carry on their work and this seems to be a good way with a good job being done along with it.

We have sponsored many good pictures. The exhibitors have found that if they can say a picture is sponsored by the Council they do much better business. *The Mikado* is one so sponsored and the theatre manager said that he was sure he would not have had any success at all with it if he could not have put our sponsorship into his advertising.

Mrs. Frank R. Anderson

President, Cleveland Cinema Club

This past year we inaugurated something a little different from our regular study group meeting, namely, a round table discussion following our business meeting. We found that there were about 10 or 15 members of the Club who were really definitely interested in the study of motion pictures and we felt that the newer members coming into the Club needed some of the background of what we have been trying to do for the past 22 or 23 years. It helps to prepare them for the contacts they make with other groups, churches or clubs in the way of giving talks or radio programs. This particular discussion group has met with a favorable response and we feel that it has been one of the most worthwhile things that we have done since the Club was organized.

Mrs. Charles Miller

Chairman of the Study Class, Philadelphia Motion Picture Forum

We have conducted our study group program along the lines of analysis and criticism. Each month we discuss about four outstanding motion pictures.

We have been fortunate in securing as leader Dr. Beaumont Bruestle, a teacher of English at Temple University, who has an excellent background for the work and who has great enthusiasm for the motion picture. He gives us a very critical and intelligent analysis of the pictures. About an hour of our study period is taken up by this, after which we have a ten or fifteen minute talk by some member of the group, a different one each time, on the topics of what is happening in Hollywood, the pictures in production, technical problems involved, and all that sort of thing.

In the morning, before our meeting, we go as guests to one of the theatres in Philadelphia to see a picture. It is not a first-run theatre and we have to take whatever picture happens to be showing. We have a short discussion of it led each time by a different member of the group. For rating that picture and other pictures that we see in previews and private showings, to which we are invited by the exhibitors, we have evaluation blanks, modeled after the National Board of Review ballot, with a few variations to suit our purpose. The blanks are counted and tallied and from them we get the general impression of the group regarding the pictures.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

of Monotony. Makes no attempt to be convincing as a story and succeeds amusingly in its portrayals of varied and crazy types. As happy foolishness it is entertaining summer fare. Paramount.

- m **CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY, THE**—Edward G. Robinson, Francis Lederer, Paul Lukas, Dorothy Tree. Original screen story by Milton Krim and John Wexley. Directed by Anatole Litvak. This film, chosen by the National Board's Committee on Exceptional Photoplays as the best picture of 1939, not for its subject but for the superb fashion in which screen technique had been applied to factual material, has been re-issued with certain additions that point up as well as broaden its significance. A year ago this film was largely looked upon as merely a spy picture, not romantic enough to be thrilling as fiction and perhaps too remote from real danger to be taken seriously. Perhaps, too, its implications were too unpleasant to face. Now time and events in Europe have given it tremendously increased meaning. It is as effective as ever

purely as a technical screen achievement, but its plea for defence against alien propaganda is immeasurably stronger because of its inescapable overtones of reality. Not the least praise-worthy thing about it is its complete absence of hysteria, and the dignity and common-sense with which it handles an extremely hot subject. If this film is to receive the support its qualities deserve, now is the time to give it that support. Warner Bros.

- f **DANCING ON A DIME**—Grace McDonald, Robert Paige. Based on story by Jean Lustig and Max Kolpe. Directed by Joseph Santley. A comedy musical in which a group of young people, when the Federal Theatre funds are withdrawn, put on the production themselves. The plot is hard to take but several musical numbers are amusing enough. Paramount.
- m ***DATE WITH DESTINY, A**—Basil Rathbone, Ellen Drew, John Howard. Original screen story by Howard J. Green. Directed by Tim Whelan. The story, full of suspense, of a doctor with a murder complex, and the way a newspaper man ferreted out his past and prevented him from carrying on his habit of killing his wives. The tension keeps interest alive and keen, and a psychoanalytical element gives it novelty. Paramount.
- f **DR. CHRISTIAN MEETS THE WOMEN**—Jean Hersholt, Dorothy Lovett. Original screen story by Marion Orth. Directed by William McGann. A comedy drama which teaches an excellent lesson. 'Pride goeth before a fall' when the women of River's End try to reduce the quick way and find that they have been bamboozled by a quack traveling professor. Dr. Hersholt is excellent as the town doctor who exposes the quack. RKO Radio.
- m **EARTHBOUND**—Warner Baxter, Andrea Leeds, Lynn Bari, Charley Grapewin. Original screen story by Basil King. Directed by Irving Pichel. The story of how a widow tracks down the murderer of her husband, aided by his spiritual presence. In essence, however, it shows the reformation of the murdered man, who appears in double exposure to see that right is done and so atone for the misdeeds of his life. Good acting and treatment help to make the fantasy convincing. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj ***EDISON, THE MAN**—Spencer Tracy, Rita Johnson. Original screen story by Dore Schary and Hugo Butler. Directed by Clarence Brown. An excellent portrayal of Thomas Edison from the time he first came to New York to sell his inventions. A beautifully acted and directed production done with sincerity. Recommended for schools and libraries. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **FLIGHT ANGELS**—Virginia Bruce, Dennis Morgan. Original screen story by Jerry Wald and Richard Macauley. Directed by Lewis Seiler. A story of air line hostesses and test

pilots. Interesting story for those who are air-minded. Warner Bros.

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- f ***FOUR SONS**—Don Ameche, Eugenie Leontovitch, Mary Beth Hughes. Based upon a story by I. A. R. Wylie. Directed by Archie Mayo. A moving, tragic story about a family of Sudeten Czechs of German extraction, on whom the full fury of Hitler's theories and practices is visited, dividing and destroying them. The picture has a strongly emotional appeal and portrays the harshness and brutality of the Nazi party system in all its aspects. Eugenie Leontovitch gives a moving performance as the bereaved mother. 20th Century-Fox.
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- f **FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE**, A—Roger Pryor, Lucile Fairbanks. Original screen story by Leonard Neubauer. Directed by Terry Morse. A lively story about the representatives of an insurance company who succeed, through a series of ingenious tricks, in saving the life of a gangster who is insured for a million dollars with their company. Not particularly original, but speedy and humorous. Warner Bros.
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- f **GAMBLING ON THE HIGH SEAS**—Wayne Morris, Jane Wyman. Based on an idea by Martin Mooney. Directed by George Amy. A story of a gambler who is finally caught through his friendship with a young newspaper man. Exciting and well acted. Warner Bros.
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- f **GHOST BREAKERS, THE**—Bob Hope, Paulette Goddard. Based on play by Paul Dicky and Charles W. Goddard. Directed by George Marshall. A spooky comedy romance. Left an old haunted castle, a girl decides to go there and find out about the ghosts and what evil lurks in the castle. Entertaining and really eerie in places. Paramount.
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- f **GIRL FROM GOD'S COUNTRY, THE**—Chester Morris, Jane Wyatt. Based on an original story by Ray Millholland. Directed by Sidney Salkow. A story of the struggles of a doctor and a nurse against heavy odds in the frozen North. Republic.
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- f **GOLD RUSH MAISIE**—Ann Sothorn, Lee Bowman, Slim Summerville. Original screen story by Wilson Collison. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Maisie hits a ghost-town, inhabited only by a couple of surly recluses, but finds them handy to her plans when there is a gold strike in the neighborhood and the empty town is packed to overflowing with desperate "Okies" who hope to strike lucky after months of wandering. A warm and bright little story with plenty of fast and witty dialogue. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
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- f **GOLDEN FLEECE, THE**—Lew Ayres, Rita Johnson. Original screen story by Lynn Root, Frank Fenton and John Fante. Directed by Leslie Fenton. Funny farce about a timid young man who gets into tough company. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
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- f **I LOVE YOU AGAIN**—William Powell, Myrna Loy. Original screen story by Leon Gordon and Maureen Watkins. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. A gay and witty comedy in which a charming rascal has to adjust himself to a nine-year's past when in a state of amnesia he has been a straight-laced stuffed shirt. There is also a wife to become adjusted to. Cleverly written, directed and acted. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
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- f **I MARRIED ADVENTURE**—The adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson in Africa and Borneo. Interesting in spots but with a good deal of repetition. Columbia.
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- m **I WANT A DIVORCE**—Joan Blondell, Dick Powell. Based on story by Adela Roger St. John. Directed by Ralph Murphy. An interesting drama showing the complications and heartaches caused by divorce. An excellent cast, well directed. Paramount.
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- f **LILLIAN RUSSELL**—Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Henry Fonda. Original screen story by William Anthony McGuire. Directed by Irving Cummings. The life and loves of Lillian Russell, the toast of the town, done in lavish manner and with an outstanding cast. 20th Century-Fox.
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- f **LUCKY CISCO KID**—Cesar Romero, Mary Beth Hughes. Original screen story by Julian Johnson from the character by O. Henry. Directed by H. Bruce Humberstone. A lively Western with more than the customary care given to acting, direction and plot. Story has all the usual Western ingredients but they are sharpened up into good entertainment. 20th Century-Fox.
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- f **MAD MEN OF EUROPE**—Edmund Gwenn, Mary Maguire. Based on the play by Guy du Maurier. Directed by Albert de Courville. British made story about a member of the fifth column who becomes friendly with an English household just before war breaks out and uses their home as a radio center to guide invading bombers to vital sections of the country. While the treatment is more emotional than anything else and concerns itself essentially with Britain, American audiences may find it a timely reminder of the need for preparedness in their own country. Columbia.
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- m ***MAN I MARRIED, THE**—Joan Bennett, Francis Lederer, Lloyd Nolan, Anna Sten. Based on the story by Oscar Schisgall. Directed by Irving Pichel. The story of an American girl who visits Germany with her German-born husband and their child, only to have the husband become completely converted to the Nazi regime. The peak of their mutual disillusionment comes when she tries to return to America with the child, while the father insists he be brought up a Nazi. Not only a completely frank denunciation of Hitler and the Nazis, calling a heel a heel throughout, but unusual in the mockery and satire it pours on the heads of Nazi leaders. Lloyd Nolan is outstanding with

his jokes and gibes and is likely to be found the most popular figure in a good cast. Altogether a well produced, entertaining picture that is obviously out to convince its audiences of the real nature of Nazi ways and theories. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. 20th Century-Fox.

f **MAN WHO TALKED TOO MUCH, THE**—George Brent, Virginia Bruce. Based on the play by Frank J. Collins. Directed by Vincent Sherman. An interesting story of what happens to a promising young lawyer after he sends an innocent man to the electric chair. Warner Bros.

m **MAN WHO WOULDN'T TALK, THE**—Lloyd Nolan, Onslow Stevens, Jean Rogers. Based on play "The Valiant" by Holworthy Hall and Robert M. Middlemass. Directed by David Burton. An interesting melodrama in which a man confesses a murder but refuses to tell who he is—the truth about him, and his relations to the murdered man gradually and excitingly emerge. 20th Century-Fox.

m **MANHATTAN HEARTBEAT** — Robert Sterling, Virginia Gilmore. Based on a novel by Vina Delmar. Directed by David Burton. A story of a young couple who find love and happiness even on a small budget and the struggle of the boy to provide medical aid when the baby comes. 20th Century-Fox.

f ***MARYLAND**—Walter Brennan, Fay Bainter, Brenda Joyce, John Payne. Original screen story by Ethel Hill and Jack Andrews. Directed by Henry King. The story of a conflict between a woman who loses her husband in a riding accident, and her son who has inherited the family passion for horses and racing. The most striking features of the picture, however, are the splendid racing atmosphere and background, the negro members of the cast, and the genuine excitement of the track. Made in technicolor which draws out the full beauty of the Maryland countryside. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. 20th Century-Fox.

f ***MORTAL STORM, THE**—James Stewart, Margaret Sullavan, Frank Morgan. Based on the novel by Phyllis Bottome. Directed by Frank Borzage. A vivid and gripping adaptation of the best-selling novel. Story centers around the family of a German-Jewish scientist and how they are affected by the coming of Hitler. Manages to be highly dramatic in its tragedy and is a completely frank denunciation of the Hitler regime. Good all-round cast. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f **MURDER IN THE AIR**—Ronald Reagan, John Littel, Lya Lys. Original screen story by Raymond Schrock. Directed by Lewis Seiler. Lively melodrama about a gang of international saboteurs who attempt to destroy vital armaments of the U. S. They are tracked down by

a pair of federal agents who do their job with plenty of excitement and humor. Warner Bros.

f ***MY LOVE CAME BACK**—Olivia de Havilland, Jeffrey Lynn, Charles Winniger. Original screen story by Walter Reisch. Directed by Kurt Bernhardt. A romantic comedy full of agreeable characters and amusing situations, involving the musical career of an attractive girl in which an embarrassing combination of men take an interest. It is all held together by a novel and very pleasing use of music, with swing stealing in on the classics. Warner Bros.

f **MYSTERY SEA RAIDER**—Henry Wilcoxon, Carole Landis. Based on the story by Robert Grant. Directed by Edward Dmytryk. A timely story of a German sea raider which is finally destroyed. The love interest is provided by a young girl who is captured and kept aboard the raider. Paramount.

f **NEW MOON**—Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy. Based on the musical operetta by Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, Frank Mandel and Laurence Schwab. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. A lavish production with excellent music. A story of a French aristocrat who goes to New Orleans as a bond servant, to further the cause of the French Revolution, and his love for the beautiful young landowner. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f **OKLAHOMA RENEGADES** — Robert Livingston, Raymond Hatton. Original screen story by Clark Condon. Directed by Nate Watt. A Western story of the fight between ranchers and homesteaders. Republic.

f **ORPHANS OF THE NORTH**—Bob Webster, Mary Joyce. Based on an Alaskan tale of the Taku Valley. Directed by Norman Dawn. The numerous photographs made by Director Norman Dawn in his Alaskan travels form the basis of a story in which a fatherless child gets lost in the Alaskan wilderness and is rescued by a kindly old gold-digger. The story is weak and clumsily assembled but the picture is recommended by virtue of its beautiful snowscapes and numerous animal studies. Monogram.

f ***OUR TOWN**—William Holden, Martha Scott, Frank Craven. Based on the stage play by Thornton Wilder. Directed by Sam Wood. A deeply moving picture, depicting the every-day life in a small New Hampshire town in the years prior to the World War, beautifully told, fine acting, and unusual in its presentation. Recommended to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. United Artists.

f **PIER 13**—Lynn Bari, Lloyd Nolan. Based on the story by Barry Connors and Philip Klein. Directed by Eugene Forde. The adventures of two daughters of a retired sea captain who live on the waterfront, one involved with a crook and the other engaged to a policeman. Lloyd Nolan is unusually good in the part of the policeman. 20th Century-Fox.

- m *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE—Greer Garson, Laurence Olivier, Mary Boland, Edna May Oliver. Based on the novel by Jane Austen. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. A picture that is likely to please all those interested in the Victorian scene and the characters of the famous original novel. The story of the vain mother and her efforts to arrange good marriages for her five daughters is scarcely dated in entertainment appeal and the performances of Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson strike a strongly romantic note. Good supporting cast in a carefully studied production. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. ■
- f PRIVATE AFFAIRS—Nancy Kelly, Roland Young, Hugh Herbert, Robert Cummings. Based on the story, "One of the Boston Bullertons" by Walton Green. Directed by Albert S. Rogell. A most amusing, nonsensical story of a black sheep of a prominent Boston family, who returns after twenty years and irons out all the family troubles. Universal.
- m QUEEN OF THE MOB—Ralph Bellamy, Jack Carson, Blanche Yurka. Based on "Persons in Hiding" by J. Edgar Hoover. Directed by James Hogan. An interesting picture of a gang with an elderly woman as the boss. Shows that crime does not pay. Very good acting on the part of Blanche Yurka. Paramount.
- fj RAINBOW OVER THE RANGE—Tex Ritter. Original screen story by Robert Emmet. Directed by Al Herman. Pleasant Western for those who like action and gunplay. Tex Ritter handles the usual situation of rustling and outlawry against a fine natural background and some pleasing songs. Monogram.
- f *RAMPARTS WE WATCH, THE—Original screen story by Robert L. Richards and Cedric R. Worth. Directed by Louis de Rochemont. The reactions of a typical American small city to the world events of 1914-18—how we eventually got into the war. Done in the March of Time style, partly actual shots of real events, partly ordinary people being ordinary people in the home scenes. Obviously done to promote preparedness, it is effective for its purpose as well as historically interesting. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Recommended for Schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- fj RANGER AND THE LADY, THE—Roy Rogers, Jacqueline Wells. Original screen story by Bernard McConville. Directed by Joseph Kane. Scene, Texas when it was a republic in the 1830's. An empire builder, during President Sam Houston's absence, tries to steal control of the vast Lone Star region, but is defeated by a ranger loyal to Houston. A welcome variation from the usual Western formula. Republic.
- m RASPUTIN—Harry Baur. Based on the "Tragedie Imperiale" by Albert Neumann. Directed by Marcel L'Herbier. A vigorous, hearty portrayal of the Russian monk who became so influential in the family of the last Romanoff Czar, done with a certain amount of sympathy. A handsome production. French dialogue and English sub-titles. Concord.
- f *RETURN OF FRANK JAMES, THE—Henry Fonda, Jackie Cooper, Henry Hull, Gene Tierney. Original screen story by Sam Hellman. Directed by Fritz Lang. In this sequel to "Jesse James" his brother Frank avenges his death without killing the "cowards" with his own hand. Brightened by Technicolor it has several splendid episodes of good western action, and some vigorous types. Blood and thunder somewhat toned down by making the outlaw so uncriminal. 20th Century-Fox. ,
- f RHYTHM ON THE RIVER—Bing Crosby, Mary Martin, Basil Rathbone, Oscar Levant. Original screen story by Bill Wilder and Jacques Thery. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. A lively story about two youngsters who act as ghost-writers for a popular composer who has lost his touch for composition. Trouble steps in when they break with the great man and try to set up shop on their own—only to be rejected as plagiarists of his work. Few of the situations have originality, but they are always bright and tuneful. Paramount
- fj SANDY IS A LADY—Baby Sandy. Original screen story by Charles Grayson. Directed by Charles Lamont. Hair-raising adventures of Baby Sandy. A good comedy for Baby Sandy fans, with a good supporting cast. Universal.
- f SCATTERBRAIN—Judy Canova, Alan Mowbray, Eddie Foy Jr. Original screen story by Jack Townley and Val Burton. Directed by Gus Meins. A merry piece, about a hillbilly girl who accidentally gets a Hollywood contract and whose appearance in the studio creates a lot of comic woe for the director. Amusing situations and amusing songs. Republic.
- f *SEA HAWK, THE—Errol Flynn, Brenda Marshall, Claude Rains, Flora Robson. Based on the novel by Rafael Sabatini. Directed by Michael Curtiz. A swashbuckling tale of sea warfare, romance and royal intrigue in the year of the sailing of the Spanish Armada. Made in the good old tradition of spectacular hand to hand fighting for the riches of the Indies and national glory, and led by Errol Flynn with gusto and agility. Splendid entertainment of a popular nature. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Warner Bros.
- f SPORTING BLOOD—Original screen story by Grace Norton. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. A story of horse racing. A young man returns to his home town after twenty years and makes good and wins the big race and also the girl he loves. Some good shots of horses. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STAGE TO CHINO—George O'Brien, Virginia Vale. Based on a story by Norton S. Parker. Directed by Edward Killy. A fresh and entertaining Western using the ingredients common to all Westerns but handling them

lightly and making the most of a capable cast. RKO Radio.

m SUSAN AND GOD—Joan Crawford, Frederic March. Based on the celebrated play by Rachel Crothers. Directed by George Cukor. A social satire. A self-centered and frivolous woman who adopts religion as a fad, wrecks the lives of her friends by meddling in their affairs and nearly ruins her own life. Very entertaining with an excellent cast and sophisticated dialogue. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT—George Raft, Humphrey Bogart, Ida Lupino, Ann Sheridan. Based on the novel by A. I. Bezzerides. Directed by Raoul Walsh. A dramatic story of the tough life of truck-drivers, and the rise to success of one of them, complicated by an infatuation of his boss's wife for him, which brings in a tragic element. Its humor is as vigorous as its characters, and it is invariably interesting. Raft has an entirely sympathetic role. Warner Bros.

f THREE MEN FROM TEXAS—William Boyd, Russell Hayden, Andy Clyde. Based on the story by Clarence E. Mulford. Directed by Leslie Selandar. A marshal and his two deputies go to California to clean up a town which is run by outlaws. Exciting and well done. Paramount.

f TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS—Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Freddie Bartholomew, Jimmy Lydon. Based on the novel by Thomas Hughes. Directed by Robert Stevenson. A good adaptation of the famous novel of Rugby School with emphasis mainly on the theories and practices of Doctor Arnold—England's most famous headmaster. The boys and their lives are portrayed with liveliness and conviction, and while there are apparent differences between the novel and the picture the latter has good entertainment value for admirers of the original. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.

m TURNABOUT—Carole Landis, John Hubbard, Adolphe Menjou. Based on the novel by Thorne Smith. Directed by Hal Roach. A most amusing comedy of a married couple who for one day change places, the wife making mistakes at her husband's office, and the husband making enemies of his wife's girl friends. Everybody in the play is bewildered and muddled at the turn of events except the two principals. Highly sophisticated dialogue. United Artists.

f VILLAIN STILL PURSUED HER, THE—Anita Louise, Richard Cromwell, Alan Mowbray, Hugh Herbert. Original screen story by Elbert Franklin. Directed by Edward F. Cline. A highly amusing burlesque melodrama, with the curse of drink as the theme, done in the

old time stilted style with gestures and asides. Well done and entertaining. RKO Radio.

m *WATERLOO BRIDGE—Vivien Leigh, Robert Taylor. Based on the play by Robert E. Sherwood. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. A story of an army captain's love for a ballet dancer during the World War, and the tragic end caused by the girl's poverty and the belief that the man she loved was killed. The acting of both Robert Taylor and Vivien Leigh are outstanding. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f WE WHO ARE YOUNG—Lana Turner, John Shelton, Henry Armetta. Original screen story by Dalton Trumbo. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. A simple story of young married life, with its economic difficulties and the coming of a baby. Excellent New York background and good subsidiary characters. A new and effective leading man. Directed with sympathy and imagination. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f WHEN THE DALTONS RODE—Randolph Scott, Kay Francis. Based on the story by Emmitt Dalton. Directed by George Marshall. An exciting Western of five brothers who become outlaws after they have been falsely accused of murder and the whole town is against them. Universal.

m WOMEN IN WAR—Elsie Janis, Wendy Barrie, Patric Knowles. Original screen story by F. Hugh Herbert, and Doris Anderson. Directed by John H. Auer. A story of the British Overseas Nursing Corps. Acquitted of a murder charge, Pamela Starr joins the corps and amid the horrors of war finds love and happiness. Republic.

f YOU'RE NOT SO TOUGH—"Dead End Kids." Original screen story by Maxwell Aley. Directed by Joe May. A gang of boys find work on a fruit ranch and make good. Universal

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- fj ACTION ON ICE (Ed Thorgerson Sports)—Ice sports of various kinds. Thrilling. 20th Century-Fox.
- f AIR ARMY (Reelism)—Impressive action shots of the U. S. air corps. RKO Radio.
- f ARROW POINTS (Pathe Sportscope)—Interesting study of dexterity with a bow and arrow. RKO Radio.
- f BERTH OF A QUEEN—Interesting account of the building and launching of the mammoth liner Queen Elizabeth. Columbia.
- f BLUE STREAK, THE (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Migration of the blue goose. Very lovely picture except for the shooting of the geese. Paramount.
- f BUYER BEWARE—One of the "Crime Does Not Pay" series, about stolen goods. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj CAT COLLEGE (Pete Smith Specialty)—A seventeen year old girl is taught by Clyde

- Beatty to train wild animals. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f CAVALCADE OF ACADEMY AWARDS — A brief history of Hollywood's famous "Oscars", with excerpts from prize-winning films of the past ten years and special attention for the leading lights and winners of 1939. Interesting. Vitaphone.
- f CHEERIO MY DEARS—A medley of strange sports, odd people etc. with a comedy commentator. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj GRADE OF CHAMPIONS (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Training very young boys in all sports. Paramount.
- f DANGEROUS DOLLARS—A lesson in how to detect and what to do about counterfeit money, made under the authority of the Treasury Department. Paramount.
- fj ESKIMO TRAILS—One of Father Hubbard's Alaskan adventures, studying the ways and language of the Alaskan Eskimos. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FASHION FORECASTS No. 8—Vivyan Donner presents coming styles in dress and footwear, with Ilka Chase supplying an amusing commentary. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GOING PLACES No. 78—Curacao. Showing the beauties of Curacao, called the Sunny Isle, one of the big sea ports of the world. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES No. 9—The Coast of Curiosities. Along the Pacific coast, showing sea lions, agates, clam diggers and large balls of stone which are called Neptune's marbles. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES No. 80—Down El Paso Way. Training American cavalry; the making of cowboy saddles and boots; candy made of cactus; goats along the Rio Grande; and the beautiful city of El Paso and the royal welcome they give visiting notables. Universal.
- fj *GUN DOG LIFE (Color Parade)—Lovely picture done in color showing how hunting dogs are trained. As told by a mother dog to her puppies. Vitaphone.
- fj *HURDLE HOPPERS (Pathe Sportscope)—Cavalry horses jumping and showing their paces. Excellent use of slow motion. RKO Radio.
- f IN THE LAND OF PAGODAS (Columbia Tour)—A travel picture showing the various types of pagodas in China. Recommended for schools and libraries. Columbia.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 9—Another in this excellent series, with the four experts answering questions. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 10—An especially good and amusing edition of this clever radio program. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 11—This adaptation of the famous radio program stars Clifton Fadiman, F. P. Adams, John Kieran, Oscar Levant and Christopher Morley. Bright and amusing. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 12—The interesting radio program brought to the screen with Wendell L. Willkie as the guest. Very timely right now. RKO Radio.
- fj INFORMATION PLEASE No. 13—One of the most entertaining of the series, with Elmer Davis as guest expert. RKO Radio.
- f *MARCH OF TIME No. 11, THE (6th Series)—"The U. S. Navy 1940." This interesting and comprehensive survey of U. S. naval power, training and equipment comes at a time when it is likely to be most popular. As dramatic and entertaining as most March of Time subjects. RKO Radio.
- fj *MARCH OF TIME No. 12, THE (6th Series)—"Spoils of War" The Dutch East Indies, how Holland has made them one of the most valuable colonies in the world, what they produce and its importance, and what they are doing to prepare against the threat of Japan. RKO Radio.
- f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED No. 4—How planes are controlled from the flying field; streamline designing; testing materials; the use of hot air to extinguish fires. Vitaphone.
- f ODD VACATIONS (Cinescope)—Training lion cubs; making masks; women's clothes and the art of make-up. Columbia.
- fj PACIFIC PARADISE (Color Cruises) — Color view of Hawaii. Paramount.
- f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 2—Interesting studies, with humorous comments, on hair-do's past and present and the modern construction of eye glass lenses. Paramount.
- fj *PLAYMATES FROM THE WILD (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Some adorable tame otters that belong to a man who is devoted to them. Good picture for "Be Kind to Animals Week." Ted Husing as commentator. Paramount.
- f PLEASUREBOUND IN CANADA — A trip through Canada showing the many rivers and waterfalls. Recommended for schools and libraries. Columbia.
- fj PONY EXPRESS DAYS (Broadway Brevity)—Romance of the postal riders during the Civil War and the coming of Bill Cody. Color. Vitaphone.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 5—Modern dentistry; gadgets; Langley Field, showing the use of the wind tunnels and the training of the air fleet.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 6—How ducks are protected from contaminated water in Utah; electric robot calculators invented by Dr. Brown of Texas; making nylon yarn; a special splint used on animals. Paramount.
- fj *SANCTUARY OF THE SEALS—A delightful portrayal of the life of a huge colony of seals on remote Alaskan islands. The seals are a most humorous and instructive spectacle and their behavior should be most appealing to children and adults alike. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj SERVANT OF MANKIND (MGM Miniature)—An account of Edison's inventions. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SILENT WINGS (Sportscope)—An interesting picture of expert gliders. RKO Radio.
- f SINK OR SWIM (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Showing the difficult art of saving people from drowning. Paramount.
- fj SPILLS FOR THRILLS (Broadway Brevity)—A thrilling picture showing the stunt men and women of Hollywood in action. Vitaphone.
- f SPORT OF KINGS (Sport Thrills)—Racing at Hialeah and the training of thoroughbreds. Columbia.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 78—A man who is expert walking on his hands; expert wood carver; a flyer whose hobby is model railroads; a cartoonist who draws blindfolded; gadgets made of shell first as a hobby and later as a trade. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 79—A blind guide; busses in Japan run by charcoal; pictures made out of old silk stockings; a strange house; a tree which supplies spring water; World War aeroplane models. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 80—Eight year old strong girl; home made machinery; old inner tubes made into bath mats; a miniature railroad; clever toys made of toothpicks. Universal.
- f STREAMLINED—Showing how the automobiles and aeroplanes put the antiquated railroad out of commission, but how the railroads made a comeback with luxurious streamlined trains. RKO Radio.
- fj SUVA, PRIDE OF FIJI—A Color Fitzpatrick Traveltalk. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj TELEVISION PREVIEW (Paraphagic) — Ted Husing explains television and Lanny Ross sings. Paramount.
- fj TOMORROW'S STARS (Sport Thrills)—Training baseball players to become big leaguers. Good picture for boys. Columbia.
- f TRIFLES OF IMPORTANCE — One of John Nesbitt's "Passing Parade" series — telling a story based on the figure "7"; what dooling (absent-minded pencil scratchings) indicate; whence divided coat-tails, lapels and sleeve buttons on men's clothes were derived. Interesting and amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f TROUBLE SHOOTER (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Horton Smith shows how difficulties in golf can be overcome by expert player. RKO Radio.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 5 — Pictures made from bits of nature; stamp collecting; batik making in Java; Gene Autrey and his many lovely horses which he trains. Paramount.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 6 — Raising sledge dogs; sculpturing with molten lead; redeeming damaged money; fleet of model war

ships handled by remote control; a collection of all kinds of clocks; mail carried several times daily six miles by gyroscope plane, from Camden, N. J. to Philadelphia. Paramount.

- f UNVEILING ALGERIA — Columbia Tour through Algeria. A photographic study of the old and new. Recommended for schools and libraries.
- f VACATION TIME (Ed Thorgerson Sports)—Outdoor sports in Florida, the usual thing given unusual attractiveness by being done in color. 20th Century-Fox.
- f VALLEY, THE (Color Parade)—Resettlement of dustbowl families in Alaska's Matanuska Valley. Most interesting and informative. Vitaphone.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 4, THE—"Social Security." A most interesting account of the workings of the social security system, entertaining both in its social and mechanical aspects. Columbia.
- m WAY IN THE WILDERNESS, A (Passing Parade Series)—A doctor devotes his life to fighting the terrible and unknown disease pellagra. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- m WOMEN IN HIDING (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—Showing up the racketeers who prey on expectant mothers who wish to hide their motherhood. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f YOUNG AMERICA FLIES (Broadway Brevity)—Bright and instructive account of the training of young pilots at Stamford University. Vitaphone.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f BLUE BARRON AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Nice dance music, and a good orchestra. Paramount.
- f HAWAIIAN RHYTHM—Harry Owens and his orchestra give their version of South Sea music and dancing. Universal.
- fj JUNIOR G-MEN (Serial) Nos. 1-6. Billy Halop, Hertz Hall, Gabriel Dell. Original screen story by George Plympton and Basil Dickey. Directed by John Rawlins and Ford Beebe. The Junior G-Men are helping the Federal Bureau of Investigation to capture the gang of crooks who call themselves "The Flaming Torch." The tough gang of boys who have a run-in with the Junior G-Men are determined to catch the gang themselves. Exciting adventure. Universal.
- f NAUGHTY NINETIES, THE—Songs and dances of the gay nineties. Very amusing. Universal.
- f PINKY TOMLIN AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Headliner)—Playing some up to the minute tunes and some of Tomlin's own compositions. Paramount.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 5—Hollywood stars at work and play. It would have been better if the Three Stooges had been left out. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 6—Seeing Hollywood with Harriet Parsons. Popular Hollywood recreation spots and the stars who visit them. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 7—Interesting information about stars' costumes and the designers who think them up. Columbia.
- fj SINGING DUDE, THE—Lively story of a singing dude who turns out to be an expert broncho-buster. Vitaphone.
- fj *STRAY LAMB (Reelism)—The story of a little lamb who is carried away by an eagle and rescued by her friend the dog. A skunk, a racoon and a puma are also in the picture. RKO Radio.
- f WHAT'S YOUR I. O.? No. 2 (Pete Smith Specialty)—An amusing quiz program of questions for the audience, some pretty crazy and all tricky and enjoyable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj YOU CAN'T SHOE A HORSE-FLY (Color Classic)—Adventures of the venturesome baby jackass with a villainous fly, till his mother rescues him. Paramount.

Cartoons and Comedies

- f BESTED BY A BEARD—Leon Errol in an amusing comedy which necessitates his dressing up as an Eastern prophet. RKO Radio.
- fj BILLPOSTERS (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck tries his hand at billposting. RKO Radio.

- fj *BILLY MOUSE'S AKWAKADE—Color Cartoon. Unusual and most entertaining picture of mice playing in the bathtub. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj BONE TROUBLE (Walt Disney Cartoon). Pluto swipes a bulldog's bone and is saved only by sheltering in a hall of mirrors. Bright and funny. RKO Radio.
- fj CATNIP CAPERS (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—The mice gang up on the cat by snaring it with catnip which carries it off in a whirl of crazy dreams. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj DONALD'S VACATION (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald goes off to the lakes for his holiday in a self-propelling canoe and meets up with some frightening wild-life. Thoroughly amusing. RKO Radio.
- fj FIGHTIN' PALS (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye goes to Africa to find Bluto. Paramount.
- fj LITTLE FLABBERMOUSE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—The mice go on an aerial railroad trip and find wonderful novelties—and the cat. Vitaphone.
- fj LOVE IN A COTTAGE—Terry-Toon Cartoon of two birds who get married and live happily in a cottage. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj MILKY WAY, THE—Color Cartoon. The three little kittens visit the Milky Way in a dream. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj MR. DUCK STEPS OUT (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald and his nephews go to call on a pretty girl friend and become frenzied jitterbugs. Speedy and thoroughly amusing with excellent synchronization. RKO Radio.
- fj ONION PACIFIC (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye wins the locomotive race and gets a kiss from Olive Oyl. Paramount.
- fj PLUTO'S DREAM HOUSE (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Mickey finds a magic lamp and when he rubs it the genii builds a magic kennel for Pluto and a lot of other things not quite as pleasing. RKO Radio.
- fj PORKY'S FISH (Looney Tunes Cartoon)—The fishes in an aquarium decide to gang up on the cat. Amusing. Vitaphone.
- fj PROF. OFFKEYSKI (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—A bright little story about a temperamental lion who conducts an animal band, and the sluggish ape who plays the drum. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj PUT PUT TROUBLE (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck has trouble with his outboard motor. RKO Radio.
- fj ROVER'S RESCUE (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—By reading "How To Win Friends and Influence Cats," Rover hopes to make friends with the kitten he takes into his canine home. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj RUPERT THE RUNT (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—A little baby pig gets the worst of it with the other animals until he learns to take care of himself. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj SNIFFLES TAKES A TRIP (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—What happens to town mice who go camping in the country. Vitaphone.
- fj SNUBBED BY A SNOB (Color Classic)—Color cartoon of a young donkey snubbed by a thoroughbred colt, but they become fast friends when the donkey saves the life of the colt. Paramount.
- fj SWISS SKI YODELERS (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—The adventures of a pig who goes skiing. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj TAMING OF THE SNOOD, THE—Buster Keaton. Keaton in the role of a hatter who gets involved with diamond smugglers. Good old-fashioned slapstick. Columbia.
- fj TIMID PUP (Color Rhapsodie)—Cartoon of a little pup who makes friends with a kitten and learns about life. Columbia.
- fj TOM THUMB IN TROUBLE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—How a little bird saved Tom Thumb's life. Vitaphone.
- fj WIMMIN HADN'T OUGHTA DRIVE (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye teaches Olive Oyl to drive a car. Paramount.
- fj WIMMIN IS A MYSKERY (Popeye Cartoon)—Olive Oyl has a dream which makes her send Popeye away. Amusing. Paramount.
- fj YE OLDE SWAP SHOPPE (Color Rhapsodie)—The cartoon adventures of three mice in an old curiosity shop. Clever in detail and amusing. Columbia.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XV, No. 7



October, 1940

The Vagaries of Censorship

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The Cinema in War-Time England

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Film Notes from Home and Abroad



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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f ARGENTINE NIGHTS—Ritz Brothers, Andrew Sisters, Constance Moore, George Reeves. Original screen story by J. Robert Bren and Gladys Atwater. Directed by Albert S. Rogell. An entertaining musical comedy with never a dull moment. A musical comedy company forced to flee the country because of debts, finds romance and adventure in the Argentine. Universal.

f *BRIGHAM YOUNG—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13.

f CHARLIE CHAN IN THE WAX MUSEUM—Sidney Toler, Sen Yung, C. Henry Gordon. Based on the character of Earl Derr Biggers. Directed by Lynn Shores. The impassive Chinese detective continues his tracking-down of evil-doers, this time in the spooky atmosphere of a wax museum filled with the gruesome models of murderers and their victims. Entertaining enough in its particular way and likely to be enjoyed by those of the family who like being scared. 20th Century-Fox.

m DANCE GIRL DANCE—Lucille Ball, Maureen O'Hara, Louis Hayward, Ralph Bellamy. Based on the novel by Vicki Baum. Directed by Dorothy Arzner. The complicated rivalry of two girls in a dancing troupe, one headed for ballet, one for burlesque. A handsome production, with a wide variety of characters and action—and each girl gets ahead. RKO Radio.

f DR. KILDARE GOES HOME—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day. Original screen story by Max Brand and

Willis Goldbeck. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Dr. Kildare returns to his own home town to establish a clinic and to help his aging father. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f FLOWING GOLD—John Garfield, Frances Farmer, Pat O'Brien. Original screen story by Kenneth Ganet. Directed by Alfred E. Green. An old oil gambler makes a last desperate bid to strike rich, aided by a tough crew of workers. The usual triangle problem arises when the old man's daughter has to choose between the crew captain and the fresh young worker who—unknown to her—is wanted by the police. The picture is at its best in vivid portrayals of the drilling of an oil well. Warner Bros.

f *FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 11.

f HAUNTED HONEYMOON — Robert Montgomery, Constance Cummings, Leslie Banks. Based on the novel, "Busman's Holiday" by Dorothy L. Sayers. Directed by Arthur B. Woods. Smooth and leisurely, as befits the honeymoon of the amiable Lord Peter Wimsey, but even there he cannot escape mystery and the temptation to solve it. Bright talk and charming characters and English country atmosphere, and a sufficiently puzzling murder forming the background of the story. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

m HE STAYED FOR BREAKFAST—Loretta Young, Melvyn Douglas, Alan Marshall, Una O'Connor. Based on Sydney Howard's adaptation of the French play "Liberte Provisoire" by Michel Duran. Directed by Alexander Hall. A loquacious communist takes refuge in a beautiful woman's apartment in Paris after taking some pot-shots at her banker husband. How he tries to convert her and ends by being converted himself is told with a good deal of comedy and drama. Coming after "Ninotchka" it is below par and full of soft spots but has enough of glitter and romance to provide good entertainment. Columbia.

f *HIRED WIFE—Rosalind Russell, Brian Aherne. Based on the story by George Beck. Directed by William Seiter. An excellent comedy of a man who marries his secretary for business reasons only to discover that he loves her. Clever and sophisticated dialogue and excellent acting by the entire cast which includes Virginia Bruce, Robert Benchley and John Carroll. Universal.

f *HOWARDS OF VIRGINIA, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 13.

(Continued on page 18)

OCT -4 1940

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The Vagaries of Censorship

THE recent skirmish of *The Ramparts We Watch* with the Pennsylvania censors is one of those things that point up how puzzling and uncertain a business censorship is. Since the Supreme Court decided that freedom of speech did not apply to the screen we have had various bodies here and there in the country judging, by standards elastic enough to allow a wide variety of interpretation, what the people of their state or community may see in the movie houses. In a country of over a hundred and thirty million people there is quite a lot of room for variety of opinion.

Theoretically, in the places where censorship got a foothold, it was largely to protect the morals of the public. It got powerful and sincere backing from people who wanted clean pictures. It didn't work very well in that direction. In spite of the labors of the few and scattered censor boards, pictures went along on about the same level of cleanliness or uncleanness they had followed before. It took a strong and well-organized volume of public opinion to persuade picture producers to adopt a code that would conform to the general idea of what was unobjectionable in movie entertainment for the average man and his family.

You don't hear much about immorality in the movies nowadays—immorality in the sense in which it is most generally meant. Few pictures get banned because they are called immoral. But every once in a while some film gets into censorship trouble because, in the phrase of the censors, it is likely to "incite" to something or other. The most

inciting things, of course, are ideas, when they are ideas that arouse emotions. Censors get terribly heated up about ideas that they don't like, or that they are afraid of. But some censors are scared by one thing, some by another. In one place the public is protected from something, in another exposed to it.

Take *The Ramparts We Watch*. It is avowedly and ardently, with March of Time's most persuasive ardor, a preachment for preparedness, and with the American state of mind what it is today you'd expect an overwhelming public "amen" to what it urges. Towards the end of the picture, to point up the dangers against which we are warned to prepare, is a section of a Nazi film which Hitler's propaganda department made to celebrate the excellence of his armies and to show how easily and thoroughly he could conquer anyone who stood up against him. The censors in Pennsylvania banned the whole film because of what they called the "terrorizing" effect of that piece of Nazism. Yet in New York City those who cared to have been able for months to see a complete film of Hitler's army conquering Poland—not with the explicit approval of the New York censors because they decided to classify the film as a newsreel that didn't come under their jurisdiction. And out in Chicago, one hears, people can see this same Hitler film in its entirety—though they were forbidden to see a powerful anti-Nazi film called *Pastor Hall* because—here it is again—it was likely to "incite—"

When censors fall out—

The Cinema in War-Time England

By ERIC ESTORICK

(Eric Estorick, an Instructor in Sociology at New York University and author of *"The Liberal Conscience in England"*—a study of the last ten years in British politics—is a member of the Review Committee of the National Board. He has just returned from England.)

WHEN Maurice Wilson, chairman of Grand National Pictures, Ltd., declared recently that English film production was about to cease, he brought down the wrath both of the British Ministry of Information and the leading film companies of England.

Mr. Wilson is supposed to have said that with the completion of two films now in work in England, no further production could be expected until Hitler had been taken care of; the two films being Gabriel Pascal's *Major Barbara* at Denham and the other a Gainsborough production at the Shepherd's Bush Studios.

The reply from the British producers was to the effect that no notice should be taken of "irresponsible rumors that British films are folding . . . and that we can't take care of Hitler and still make movies." The statement goes on to say that big schedules are being planned and fulfilled with new directors and new producers replacing "those who have fled to sunnier climes." Forty films are reported completed since the start of the conflict, headed by *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Major Barbara*, *Pastor Hall*, *Over The Moon*, *The Farmer's Wife*, *Bulldog Drummond's Secret*, *The Silver Key*, *Gaslight*, *Inspector Hornleigh Goes To It*, and *Convoy*. The producers say that these films represent a live industry making films, some of which have been breaking pre-war box office records.

I do not wish to give the impression that the British film industry has not been affected by the war. I think that of all industries the movies have probably come off the worst, due in great measure to governmental indecision to suspend or repeal the Quota Act, causing panic in an industry already permeated with

production jitters. As one person said to me late last year, "According to the Government's statements—though not according to their actions—we are at war for freedom and democracy. The film industry should be used to devise films showing this to be a fact. Unfortunately any propaganda on these lines sponsored by the Government might be taken literally by the people of the Empire. . . . The curious thing about the management of such ordinary things in our daily life as movies, theatres and newspapers in war is that the Government entrusts these to people who have never produced a film, a play or a newspaper in their lives. The result is that we at first got no news, we are only just able to see a play, and film-making is at a standstill here."

A great deal of criticism was directed against the Film Division of the Ministry of Information as a result first of impeding the production of new films, and second the release of them when completed. As the June, 1940 *Documentary News Letter* reported, "The Film Division has yet to shake itself out of the stately but slow methods of the peace-time civil service and to gear itself to the minute-to-minute urgencies of war." This obstructionism, the *News Letter* reported, seemed to be the result of two factors. First, "the smugness of established civil servants who, by some psychological aberration, have refused to adjust themselves to the rapid tempo and the iconoclastic urgencies of a total war; this smugness, entrenched behind a barricade of precedent, procedure and prejudice, can do much to hamper, and often to prevent, the putting into action of plans which should have immediate priority over the niggling claims of red-tape and of official hierarchies." The second obstructive factor is a characteristic one, the nature of which has been acutely analyzed by J. B. Priestley, who says, "It is the refuge of the man who hates democracy, reasonable argument, tolerance, patience, and a humorous equality . . . who loves bluster and swagger . . . plotting in back

rooms, shouting and bullying. . . . It is not really a balanced attitude of mind at all. It belongs to those people who cannot find their own way out of adolescence, who are really overgrown, self-tormenting schoolboys, who may be middle-aged, but are really at heart so many Dead End Kids."

Perhaps as a direct result of this indictment, or most likely as final recognition of the systematic delays taking place within the Bureau, the Ministry of Information quickly announced the commissioning of a series of five minute films to be released week by week. The object was to get across to the public a specific message. The first list of fourteen subjects was put into production immediately and within the month four or five had already been screened. This plan represented probably the most ambitious program of short film-making ever contemplated by any government to provide "information and enlightenment" from its viewpoint for the millions who attend the movies in Britain.

The reason advanced for limiting the running time of the films to approximately five minutes is largely that exhibitors will have no difficulty in fitting them into their normal programs. If the films were longer there would be conflict with contracted-for and paid contracts. The time limitation eliminates any source of friction between the Bureau and the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association.

The International Film Center informs us in their broadside, *Film News*, that production of films primarily for movie theatres is being made for issue at the rate of one per week. About 1000 copies of each film are distributed for exhibition free of charge in nearly all of Britain's 4,500 movie houses within a month of issue. This policy of an intimate film message week by week to the cinema-goers of Britain is considered the most important step in "official publicity" in Britain since the beginning of the war.

Of the films so far released about half have concentrated on the human and dramatic element, the rest being based on the "commentary and music" technique. Priestley's *Britain at Bay*, made by the G.P.O. Film Unit, falls into the latter category; *A Call to Arms*, directed by Brian Desmond Hurst,

and *They Also Serve*, directed by R. I. Grierson, serve best the former category. *A Call to Arms* deals with the intense effort required of munition workers, while *They Also Serve* depicts the story of a simple housewife and her daily routine activities. The round of simple humanity with which the audience associates itself in this film—the effect being that moral values and direct propaganda values are intermingled—makes the total message a living, gripping reality. Others completed are *Westward Ho*, 1940, on the evacuation of the children, directed by Thorold Dickenson; *Food for Thought*, on the subject of diet, directed by Adrien Brunel; and *Miss Grant Goes to the Door*.

Many other documentary shorts have been produced since the war began, most of them over ten minutes in length. Some, it is feared, are dated by the rapid course of events, others will continue to remain valid by reason of their subjects or their technical quality.

Miss Winifred Holmes, writing in the 1940 Spring number of the English publication, *Sight and Sound*, turned the screw to its proper notch when she declared that "for propaganda, for building up morale, for creating a desire to share in defending the good things, the worthy things, of our culture and our people, documentary films cannot be beaten." She goes on to tell us, with cutting understatement, that while newspapers and newsreels are concerned chiefly with war, the people are suspicious of them, feeling that they're being controlled, that something is being put over on them. They want to see, Miss Holmes maintains, their own boys and husbands, their billets, their wise-cracking, their domestic life. These people still have hobbies, they have their neighborliness; they have their own interests, their sports and their inner problems. It is in this area of human desire that the documentary film serves best. Documentaries, Miss Holmes continues, the kind made in England today, with their human interest, their suspense and their reality, are the finest weapon of all.

Examples are:—*The First Days*, *Squadron 992*, *Spring Offensive*, *Men of the Lightships*, *These Children Are Safe*, *The Big City*, *The New Britain*, *Empire Round the Atlantic*, *The Story of Wool*, *Unemployment and Money*, *Vital Service*, *Fourth Estate*.

There are many other titles of wartime shorts that indicate their subject matter clearly; *Ring of Steel*, *Factory Front*, *King's Men*, *Under Sea Patrol*, *Bringing It Home*, *Behind the Gun*, *With All Our Might*, *Feed the Furnaces*, *Raw Material is War Material*, *Brittania is a Woman*, *SOS*, *Civilian Front*, *Danger Coast of Britain*, *A Nation Springs to Arms*, *Voice of the Guns*, *Home Front*, *Leave It To Us*, *Scaremongers*, *Sea Fort*, *Somewhere in Scotland*, *Young Folks Show the Way*, *Sailors Without Uniform*, and numerous others. The quality of these films varies and some must now be out of date, what with the quick satiation of war time minuteae by the movie-going public.

A number of these films deserve special attention as a result of their dynamic, incisive qualities. *Squadron 992*,* produced by the G. P. O. Film Unit, now absorbed into the Film Bureau of the Ministry, is an exciting film which removes war from a shadowy abstraction and brings it perilously close to the English garden. It does not boost or boast; it treats the public to an intelligent presentation of the secrets of dive-bombing, of the real function of the balloon barrage, of the training of men to look after it, and of the efficient organization of the R. A. F. that sets up a new defense as soon as it is found to be needed. The air raid is a piece of photographic genius. *Men of the Lightships* deals with the bombing of unprotected lightships and the merciless exposure to death and strafing of the seamen. *S.O.S.* is a simple and straight-forward story of the constant preparedness of a lifeboat crew. With every storm on the Cornish coast they stand ready for instant action. A distress signal, a fishing smack in difficulties, and the coxswain rounds up the crew from their homes or their fishing nets. The village streets are alive with running feet as the men race to the lifeboat house to launch their vessel. And when the sea is calm there are other things to do. This film is made out of the stuff of life; it does not engage in flashy heroics but rather in the everyday activity whose impact on our lives is little understood in the burly of frenzied movement. *The Big City* uses the theme of London's transport system to specify the

varied working and living districts of the metropolis. There is a minimum of diagrams and a maximum of human examples. As a result the film is warm and alive and the contrast between the actual structure of the transport system and the personal stories of typical Londoners who depend on it, takes on a significance which is sometimes ironical and sometimes sympathetic. *Behind the Guns* is the story of one section of the reserved occupation list—of the soldiers without uniform who keep the Forces armed. It is a picture of the broad and ceaseless work going on in armament factories all over the country. *The Fourth Estate* is about the London Times as the Times sees itself. It is a blend of starchy dignity and self-conscious loyalty to an historic tradition. *Ring of Steel*, the third of Paramount's series of features dealing with the various Services, is an account of the Navy's work in war-time done in first class journalistic style. Particularly striking are the scenes of the Navy in the Arctic and the section on minesweeping. *Vital Service* is about hospital service. It takes us for a few minutes behind the scenes of a modern hospital and gives us a new angle on up-to-date methods. One section of the film, dealing with the especial war-time need of hotwater and steam, and the integral relation of the boiler-room to the rest of the hospital, is most graphic. *The Story of Wool*, planned primarily for educational use and as a "background" film, deals with the passing of wool as an early English domestic production to the coming of shuttles and water power in the production of cloth—from rioting weavers robbed of their bread by the new machines, to today, and the hundreds of thousands whose livelihood is the weaving industry. *The Voice of the Guns* is a one-reel survey of some of the guns in use in the army.

The Co-Operative Movement released in the first month of the war two short films, *People With a Purpose* and *The Voice of the People*. The former deals with the educational work of the Co-Operative Party, how it came into being, and how it operates today. It shows the determination of working people to supplement an inadequate State education. The latter film shows how ceaseless struggle against vile conditions and oppression in the nineteenth century made the co-operative

*This film may now be seen at the New York World's Fair.



Sky-view from Fleet Street, photographed by the author

trade union and political organization possible; how all the great advances made in the last hundred years have been due to ceaseless and self-sacrificing vigilance. In May of this year the Workers Film Association for the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers released *The Builders*, which prompted Hannen Swaffer, the famed English critic who openly disliked documentary films, to declare that he made an exception in favor of this one. The early trade union struggles, the Chartists, the persecution of the laboring folk, the Nazi-ish justice meted out, make this documentary more dramatic than the many books already published on the subject.

Additional films in production—according to latest reports they may have already been released—are films for the Air Ministry, on land reclamation, Scotland, the church in war-time, the merchant navy, the utilization of raw materials in the war effort, the police, welfare of the workers, health services, war-time cookery, national resources, women in industry, mother and child, home produced food, malaria control, the transfer of skill, British response to the German challenge, the Air Force, sea power, the civilian in war

time, and others not yet in the shooting stage. Though this list is by no means the last word on the subject it will give the American reader an idea of the breadth and scope of work in progress.

In the 16mm non-theatrical field there is immense activity for fall and winter. A fleet of travelling projector units is being organized and film production for their special use includes twenty-four one-reelers completed in September. In the early fall, according to present plans, sixty-five travelling units, each covering a circuit of six villages week by week, will be operating, each giving three shows a day: morning to children (educational), afternoon to women (instructional), evening to mixed adults (entertainment feature and informational shorts). In addition there will be about fifty Regional Mobile Units, four to each of twelve Civil Regions, centered in cities, giving two or three shows a day to clubs and workers' societies. It is intended also to loan 100 projectors to libraries, museums, and welfare halls in urban districts, each to show a different program on alternate weeks. There will also be occasional special shows in movie theatres outside the normal opening hours.

There is a serious hitch in the field of educational film production so far as school-room use is concerned. This has been due chiefly to the inevitable shifting of personnel and equipment to the needs created by the war. While a complete collapse of that phase of film production would be most unfortunate, there is every reason to believe that the lag created by the crisis can be overtaken at any allocated time.

Finally, it would be well to emphasize that there has been no dearth of entertainment films since the beginning of the war. If, in this article, I have stressed the activities in production of documentary and government sponsored films, it is because these films best illustrate the changes in British film fare. But I should not want to give the impression that the documentary has taken the place of the entertainment film. In fact it is safe to say that with a three month leeway at the outside the English movie-goer has consistently viewed our offerings: at times before us.

The British folk are great movie-goers, even though the price of seats in many theatres is monstrously high. In peacetime eighteen million persons attend the movies each week, the figure dropping to approximately ten million in the summer period and going above the greater figure during the holiday season. Where movie schedules have not been disrupted by bombardments the peace time ratio remains constant with the present time.

The one serious break in attendance occurred in the opening weeks of the war, when all the cinemas were closed; probably as a precautionary measure, to bring home to the public the inevitable oncoming of indiscriminate destruction. These weeks of grace made the film critics both fearful and introspective. "The balloon barrage," wrote Miss Elizabeth Young, London film critic, "is for me almost a sufficient compensation for the lack of other entertainment. At sunset it resembles nothing so much as one of those lurid paintings of sheep and cattle in the Highlands. Just now we are all too occupied to miss the movies, anyway. But sooner or later the human need for entertainment will reassert itself and we shall want our movies back."

A hue and cry followed the government's continued ban on theatre openings. Critics declared the movies to be less expensive and certainly more cultural than having to turn to the pub as the only alternative for entertainment. In big cities the problem was especially intense as a result of a greatly concentrated industrial population and the staffing of troops—either in barracks or returning on leave.

By the middle of September the curfew was off and the showing of American and English productions proceeded in the normal way. Of this year's American films, *When Tomorrow Comes*, *Stanley and Livingstone*, *Blackmail*, *Only Angels Have Wings*, *Nurse Edith Cavell*, *Golden Boy*, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, received most of the critics' interest, the latter two being almost unanimously hailed as masterworks of the modern screen. On the English side of production, *A Window in London*, *Escape to Happiness*, *Proud Valley* (starring Paul Robeson), *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery*, *Poison Pen*, and *On the Night of the Fire*, have probably been the most noteworthy.

It would be useless palaver to list at length the American films being shown in England. A large number are of no interest—in fact, a London official complained to me that first he had to fight for the reopening of the theatres, then for the extension of the hours, and finally for better movies. He added, however, that even second rate pictures were to be preferred to a tight Quota law which might cut down almost to zero the number of imported films.

* * * *

If in the course of this somewhat hasty chronicle I have dwelt hardly at all on the public reaction to the films discussed, I hope that the very nature of many of them will have indicated the state of tension, labor and apprehension in which the English common man finds himself today. If a less discriminating critical opinion is at work within the public today, I feel that this is evenly matched by the breadth of creation forced on the film makers by the exigencies of war. This is all of second account, nonetheless, as the American people and publics everywhere owe these intrepid people in warwork and creation a warm nod and a tight grasp.

Notes From Home and Abroad

BARELY nine months ago the National Board chose *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* as the best picture in 1939. It was a time when such a picture was frowned on in many quarters, a time when there were still an European market and a feeling that neutrality was something as fine and delicate as thistle-down, easily destroyed by a script-writer's careless pencil. *Confessions* had already been on the nation's screens for eight months when the Board picked it as the best of the year, and in our review of May 1939 it was summed up as "Hollywood's first effective example of a kind of movie that the dictators have known the value of for some time in shaping the thoughts and feelings of their own people." It was, in fact, the first screen demand for preparedness, and for many people it came too early in the day to be good taste. But today its message is being echoed by numerous films, none as good and as full of punch as their predecessor, but all alive to much the same implications. In a recent issue the *Motion Picture Herald* headlined an article "189 Films on War, Patriotism and Preparedness . . ."—all films completed or in production during the last twelve months. If *Confessions* was the trail-breaker, *The Mortal Storm* gave the go-ahead signal to what the Herald calls "direct attacks on the Nazi form of Government," and it was followed by Fox's *Four Sons* and *The Man I Married*, Warner's *Secret Army*, Columbia's *Mad Men of Europe*, and Paramount's *Mystery Sea Raider*. Coming along now are United Artist's *Pastor Hall* and *The Great Dictator*, and RKO's release of *The Ramparts We Watch*.

Certain of the 189 films are, of course, importations from England and France. The Herald lists these foreigners as numbering 35, leaving most of the remaining 154 as Hollywood's own productions. The latter divide into features and shorts, and some idea of Hollywood's plunge into the conflict is obtained by the statement that they deal with "war and the troubles of Europe, national defense and preparedness, patriotism and

Americanism, dictators and democracies, the armies and the navies and marines, Nazis, Fascists, Communists, spies and refugees and sundry related subjects, besides the topical subjects of the day as depicted in the news-reels."

It makes quite a mixed list, and above all it is a far cry from Warner's bold step of fifteen months ago—a time when even "sundry related subjects" might have sounded too un-neutral for American audiences.

* * * *

Foreign film fans will be relieved to read in *Variety* a long list of celebrated artists and screen stars now reported "safe" in France. The list was published a few weeks ago and cannot be expected to be entirely accurate at the time we go to press. We publish it, however, as one of the few bits of film news to reach this country from a conquered section of Europe.

Two of the most famous of France's screen stars have managed to reach the United States. They are Victor Francen and Madeleine Ozeray. Undoubtedly there are many others en route, but delayed in Spain, Portugal and England. Of those who remain in France, most are in the unoccupied zone, says *Variety's* correspondent. Maurice Chevalier, Gaby Morlay, Danielle Darrieux, Abel Gance and Marcel L'Herbier are on or around the Riviera. Louis Jouvet is in Paris, where Sascha Guitry is planning several productions. Yvonne Printemps, Pierre Fresnay and Pierre Dac are at Toulouse; Jean Cocteau at Perpignan, and the famous pianist Alfred Cortot at Vichy. Others reported safe are Jean Pierre Aumont, Louis Barrault, Pierre Brasseur, Armand Bernard, Tristan Bernard and Pierre Carne. Many of the men listed are newly returned from their regiments and there is as yet no word of those who are in German prison camps.

* * * *

Also from *Variety* come reports on the progress of the filming of Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*. This is Gabriel Pascal's successor to *Pygmalion* and the producer cables

that the first print is unlikely to arrive here before November. Until recently, he says, production went ahead regardless of air alarms, but the stepping up of the raids has caused valuable time to be lost in shelters. As though this were not enough, adds his press agent in this country, the company was faced by a series of production problems that give us some idea of what film-making must be like in a small country at war. For outdoor shots the company had to travel a hundred miles to avoid the incessant noise of airplane engines. It took days to obtain a particular shot of the Tower of London, and when this was finally achieved the print showed part of the Tower's balloon barrage. (Pascal is leaving this in, says *Variety*: even if it is twenty years out of date for *Major Barbara* it is most topical for present-day audiences.) After working until 9 p.m. five or six of the staff must patrol the studios as air-raid wardens until 5 a.m., and be back on production four hours later. The resulting lack of sleep has slowed the company up considerably. And as a final source of irritation Pascal's press agent for the United States comes under alien classification, which means that she is probably the world's only p. a. who is bound by law to be in bed by 10:30.

The Devil's Disciple is next on Pascal's list, to be followed by *The Doctor's Dilemma* and *Saint Joan*. Production difficulties may cause these to be made in Hollywood. *Major Barbara* will be released in this country through United Artists.

* * * *

We were interested to note in a full-page ad. in the Canadian Moving Picture Digest that the Pylon Theatre in Toronto was breaking all attendance records and had been "Positively FORCED to continue for an entire WEEK to satisfy the demand." The name of the movie, *Pink Pandora*, sounded as strange and unfamiliar as the revival of an old silent classic—until we examined the ad. more closely and discovered that no movie was listed as showing at the Pylon Theatre. *Pink Pandora*, in all its loveliness, was a "Dinner Set Beautiful," to which "nothing offered can be compared"—not even the nameless movie which presumably was given away with it.

N. D.

The Next Conference

THE fundamental things about motion pictures, for those who are earnestly interested in the screen, do not change much from year to year, but each year, with whatever changes it brings inside and outside the movie world, shifts the emphasis of interest. The purpose of the National Board's annual conferences is always to bring together people who want to talk over those shifts and interests, with all their implications, and to hear what authoritative persons have to say about them. The Seventeenth Annual Conference, coming in the fall instead of the mid-winter this year, will be held at the usual place, the Hotel Pennsylvania, beginning on Thursday, November 14th, and continuing through the next two days. The general subject to be covered by the talks and picture showings will be the motion picture in two of its purposes—to entertain and give pleasure, and to teach and interpret—two purposes which often overlap and cooperate. Mr. Estorick's article in this number of the Magazine shows illuminatingly what an important part the fact-film has become in England's fight for existence. The conference will present information and opinion from well-known people, and others equally competent if not so well-known, on the motion picture of this year and these days. There will be showings of new, important, and in some cases, unusual, films. More definite announcements of specific speakers and guests and topics will be made in a short time.



This renowned actor is expected to be at the Conference in a new role.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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FRANK WARD

Foreign Correspondent

Written by Charles Bennett and Joan Harrison, with additional dialogue by James Hilton and Robert Benchley, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, photographed by Rudolph Maté. Produced by Walter Wanger, distributed by United Artists.

The cast

Johnny Jones	Joel McCrea
Carol Fisher	Laraine Day
Stephen Fisher	Herbert Marshall
Jolliot	George Sanders
Van Meer	Albert Basserman
Stebbins	Robert Benchley
Rowley	Edmund Gwenn
Mr. Powers	Harry Davenport
Krug	Eduardo Ciannelli
Doreen	Barbara Pepper
Latvian diplomat	Eddie Conrad
Assassin	Charles Waggenheim
Tramp	Martin Kosleck

ALFRED HITCHCOCK has abandoned Daphne du Maurier—at least till she writes another best-seller—and gone back to the kind of picture that makes him the most revived director in New York's movie houses. The kind is rather loosely called melodrama, but Hitchcock's is melodrama with a difference: action and humor and vivid characters and surprise and above all an absorbing speed that won't allow your eye to wander an instant from the screen, all combined in a style that no other director can even imitate. It's a kind of melodrama that doesn't become stale, because you can see it again and even again and still find something in it that you missed before. When you have lost the thrill of surprise you have more than ever the thrill of watching expert skill at work.

Made in Hollywood, *Foreign Correspond-*

ent is American only to the extent of having a brief introductory business in an American newspaper office to start things off, Robert Benchley as Robert Benchley, and an American hero. Was Hitchcock having a quiet little joke for himself by making that hero Joel McCrea? Straightway we are over the seas, in Holland and England, wandering around with Joel, whose sudden transformation from reporter to foreign correspondent is the perfect lantern-slide illustration of the old song:

"Good-bye mate, good-bye mate!

Good-bye mule, with your old hee-haw!

I don't know what the war's about

But you bet, by gosh, I'll soon find out!"

The illusion of always being with this American reporter, seeing with his eyes and hearing with his ears, is craftily achieved and sustained. The screen is continuously alive with a background of sights and sounds—streets, crowds, casual strangers in and out, going about their business, talking their maybe foreign talk—and against the hypnotic reality of such a background anything that happens must, for the moment, be believed. What happens is a fairly simple spy-adventure business: the American is trying to find out if there is going to be an outbreak of war, and when, and some other people whose identities and connections are part of the mystery, are trying to find out what Holland will do, if and when. A lot of it looks as actual as things the rotogravure sections have been printing any time these last two years. And there's a love-story, not very much of one but almost too much at that. Because our hero is far more interesting in pursuit of news than in pursuit of a maid.



The shooting down of the Clipper in mid-Atlantic

The man who holds the secret everyone is trying to learn is a Dutch diplomat, and it is around him that all the intrigue and adventure center. The swift rush of events is something like making a ski-jump over a rough course with bumps and hollows in it that would trip you if you were not going so fast. Any pause to reason why, or how, might be fatal, and Hitchcock gives his audience no chance to pause, until the crash of a flying clipper in mid-ocean, fired on by enemy guns, wrings the last squeeze of excitement out of the plot and the final scene of the reporter broadcasting from London amid darkness and falling bombs leaves a last impression of terrifying reality.

Foreign Correspondent is somewhere in the top brace of Hitchcock's masterpieces. Different people have different favorites, but here surely any Hitchcock fan will find plenty of what he is looking for. The Latvian gentleman whose incomprehensible appearances and language might be sinister and certainly are funny, the Great Dane that is definitely sinister, the garrulous and ingra-

tiating assassin, the Dutch windmill, the mysterious tramp, the shooting on the long flight of steps in The Hague that might have come right out of a news-reel, the attempted murder in the cathedral tower while a Requiem Mass is going on, the old woman on the sinking clipper, gentle-seeming people turning out to be villains, crafty people turning out to be solidly on the side of virtue, and lest this sort of deception should become too sure a cue, some people turning out to be just what they seem to be. Such things as these make Hitchcock pictures what they are, along with such use of natural sound and music as Hitchcock has been a master at, just as he was a pioneer, ever since a sound-track was added to movie film.

Into this Hitchcock pattern fits, surprisingly and patly, Robert Benchley, as Benchley as ever. And of course there is the Hitchcock signature, like Whistler's butterfly—Hitchcock himself bustling unobtrusively through a scene. Don't confuse him with one of the taxi-drivers.

(*Rated Exceptional*)

J. S. H.

Screen and History

THE American screen has been turning with surer foot to American history for its subjects. We've always had, and surely always shall have, the outdoors and close-to-pioneering of Westerns, which are so certain of their public that they can go on year after year using the same old plot. But within a fairly short time a lot of the so-called big pictures have gone into important American beginnings for sturdy stories and stirring action, with more and more attention to true portraiture of time and character and to some sort of interpretation to link with what came after. Americanism, if we have to use that word in contrast to other isms, isn't something for campaign speeches alone, and where is the rough and hearty spirit of it better to be expounded than in tales about the early settling of the country?

This fall we have *Brigham Young* and *The Howards of Virginia*, one a big emigration into the wilderness in flight from savage intolerance, the other the revolt of the colonies against England. Both are about big beginnings.

Brigham Young is essentially another *Covered Wagon*, including the wagons. The early story of the Mormons is a somewhat ticklish subject for the screen, since it has to be treated in school-book fashion if it isn't to arouse some of the same feelings that pursued the disciples of Joseph Smith across the country a hundred years ago. Joseph's revelations, the writing of his Book of Mormon, and especially his teachings and practices about wives, would be hard to take sympathetically, so we have only some of his communal ideas about industriousness and sharing the fruits of labor, expressed with a sort of Emersonian dignity, and his martyr-like death before Brigham Young stepped into the leadership of his followers. Then we get a fine parade of courage and determination pushing westward, over rivers, across plains, through mountains, overcoming hardships, disloyalty, fears, dissension, to the final desert stopping place, which was to be made blooming and prosperous in the years to come. It is a stirring business, with lift and excitement to it, and at the end a beautifully executed

miracle (with authentic historical foundation) to save the desperate band from starvation. In spite of the ads there's little sign and little mention (and that mostly in a comic vein) of polygamy. And there's a mild and routine little love-story.

The Howards of Virginia is a section of Elizabeth Page's long and carefully historical novel of the beginnings of the American nation, "The Tree of Liberty." Great personages moved and talked through that novel, which carried the Virginia conflict between tidewater Tories and back-country pioneers on through the Revolution and the more national conflict between the principles of Jefferson and those of Alexander Hamilton. In the picture, as in the novel, that conflict is personified in Matt Howard and his wife and sons, but it goes only so far as the imminent surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Many of the scenes were made in Williamsburgh. It is by far the best big picture that has been made of the American Revolution, done with meticulous heed to setting and dress, and once the revolt of the colonies is started many a glimpse of important happenings. Events in Boston, and among the Continental soldiers, are swiftly and vividly pictured in some of Mr. Vorkapich's best montage style, and there are stirring scenes in the Virginia House of Burgesses, with Patrick Henry making his two ringing speeches against tyranny. The picture is slow in getting started, taking a long and not too enlightening time to get Matt Howard married to the fine lady of the tidewater who was to make his conflict between domesticity and patriotism so thorny. It is only when Matt's sons grow up enough to take sides that the family life of the Howards becomes really moving. Most of the characters, in fact, are stereotyped and superficial, like figures at a costume party, but there is splendid sweep and action to the events in which these characters lose themselves as individuals and become merely a part of a great movement. As history, so far as it attempts to go, the picture is accurate and illuminating, far beyond what most films of its kind have managed to be before.

It's not often, now, that many people hark back regretfully to the days of silent films, but these two pictures do arouse a feeling of

how much better they might have been without talk. So much of the conversation in the *Howards*, for instance, is sheer waste of time, besides provoking an uncomfortable suspicion that those people didn't really talk like that. Brigham Young, because of the words given him to say and the way Dean Jagger says them, is admirable and authentic Yankee, but he was never fancy in his language like the Peyton family into which Matt Howard so impulsively married. Brigham Young could much more easily be made to seem real in his talk than Thomas Jefferson. And the love scenes! Outside of comedies, the "I love you" business is usually embarrassing on the screen, the more serious the more likely to produce wriggings and mental discomfort, if not actual laughter. Only exceptional writing can make love articulate and moving at the same time, for the eavesdropper on what is after all an extremely private matter.

J. S. H.

In Camera

EVERY master has disciples whose lives inevitably become tied up with the great man's living and doing. Usually the disciple's part is the propagation of his master's ideas and achievements, but often in the realm of art this propagation is widened to include actual participation in creating the work of art. The disciple who is permitted to paint the wings of a background angel may sometimes share in the glory of the finished picture; more often his handiwork is used to excuse his master's failings. Invariably he is confined by the master's original sketch and conception; he may fill in, touch up and complete, but he cannot spread himself beyond the already defined limits of the canvas.

Eisenstein, and his cameraman Tisse, are the masters who supplied the outline and materials for *Time in the Sun*. They shot thousands of feet of film which they intended to make into a grandiose history of Mexico, culminating in the revolt of the peon against tyrannical landowners. And there they let the matter drop and returned to Russia, leaving behind them thousands of fragments—and an idea. For the disciples who come after

them hoping to assemble these fragments, only one course of action is possible: they must follow the original conception to the best of their ability, and they must do it solely with the original material. If they fail they are made the scapegoats; if they succeed the name of Eisenstein becomes more glorious than ever.

We saw one assemblage of these fragments in *Thunder Over Mexico* a few years back. The present attempt is much better than the first: it makes its own choice from the original material and employs better judgment not only in selecting but in assembling. Let us say at once that Marie Seton and Paul Burnford have done as well as could be expected of any disciples; the major flaws in *Time in the Sun* were intrinsic in the film before they began to edit it.

It is a film which bears all the stamps of a grand conception which was never thought through to the end. Its story of Mexico is a series of brief jottings moving only in a very general way towards a defined end. Its time sequence and continuity are loose and wayward, its emphases—when they exist at all—are indiscriminate and often without any adequate preliminary lead-up. Like its predecessor, *Thunder Over Mexico*, it collapses as a document of revolution, never going more than skin deep in its depiction of the rebellious peon and depending upon the agony of a tortured face in close-up where the situation demands careful and subtle development of the spirit of revolt. As a symbol of oppression it chooses a bloated landlord having his way with an innocent peon girl—a symbol requiring infinite artistry if it is not to sink to the entertainment level of the old gentleman on the cover of *Esquire*.

One feels that no matter how often these fragments may be assembled the completed picture will always present itself as a film without a director. No disciple, however gifted, can supply what it lost when its fragments were first abandoned. And where the director's hand appears it is not in any way to the advantage of the film. Here we have only fragments to consider and any credit for them belongs entirely to the cameraman, Tisse. There are hundreds of such frag-

(Continued on page 17)

Comment on Community Activity

Book Week Is Here! November 10th to 16th

BOOK WEEK means that the National Board of Review has prepared its 19th annual "Selected Book-Films" list. This includes the selected films of the year adapted from books and published plays, or having special book tie-up value. The list is priced at 10c but is free to Magazine subscribers who write for it.

The dates of Book Week are also those of Education Week, and since the membership of a Motion Picture Council includes organizations active in these two interests there is ample opportunity to introduce film features into the observances. Helps for Book Week can be secured from Book Week Headquarters, 62 West 45th Street, New York City, and for American Education Week from the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.

Book Week slogan for 1940 is "Good Books — Good Friends." "Good Films" might appropriately be added predicting the motion picture interest. For those Councils who will particularly stress film activity at this time we offer as suggestions some of the ideas about community book-film or library tie-up, during Book Week and the year around, which have been reported to us:

**Mrs. B. L. Meek, President,
Knoxville (Tenn.)
Motion Picture Council**

"During Book Week we placed posters in all schools, theatres, department and music stores, libraries, the Y.W.C.A. and the Y.M.C.A. Our city librarian arranged an attractive corner for us with books and pamphlets pertaining to motion pictures and the files of our weekly movie guide, which is now a permanent feature. Our Council has presented to the corner a subscription to the National Board of Review Magazine. Persons unable to come to the library may telephone for information on current films. Our theatre manager gave the library and the Council an attractive "flash" at his largest theatre."

**Mrs. Joseph L. White, President,
Montclair (N. J.)
Motion Picture Council**

"We maintain what we call a still picture library. We take the stills of an outstanding picture and file them in a large manila envelope at the library. On it we have the cast of characters, the name of the producer, and so forth. These envelopes are circulated just like books. For *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington* our library compiled a special program: 'Book Route to Washington Fame—Behind the Scenes Through Non-Fiction and Fiction.'"

**Mrs. A. S. Tucker, Advisory
Vice-President, Louisiana Council for
Motion Pictures**

"Twice a year the Council has an open meeting usually attended by two to three hundred people. At this meeting we present a review of a very fine film or of a book that has been made into a film. The National Board of Review and other published film lists are placed in our public libraries."

**Mrs. Charles W. Swift, President,
Motion Picture Council of Elmira, N. Y.**

"In our Motion Picture Week observance book stores and libraries exhibited books that were used for pictures. National Book Week was also observed with posters and exhibits in the schools and the college and in the libraries and book stores."

**Mr. W. W. Whittinghill, President
Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council**

"One of the monthly meetings of the Detroit Motion Picture Council during the 1939-40 period was devoted to the subject of 'Film Work in the Greater Detroit Public Libraries.' This was presented in the form of a panel discussion by librarians. We also had a representative from the library on the radio in conjunction with the work of our Council."

**Mrs. Warren Hansen, Chairman
Committee of Motion Pictures,
Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs**

"Bookmarks are being used in several cities and chairmen are making scrap books of the selected films showing in their community. Also the history and literature departments are reviewing historical or other books which have been adapted for the films."

**Mrs. Harold I. Spence, Motion Picture
Council for Brooklyn, N. Y.**

"We have devised a form for putting our picture resumés into the libraries. These are printed in squares, on a large sheet of paper, and are then cut out and pasted on 3 x 5 cards and put in a little filing cabinet placed on the counter at the library. In that way they are very accessible and make it easy for people in the library to look up a film."

**Mrs. Walter V. Magee, Vice Chairman,
Motion Picture Department, Cleveland
(Ohio) Federation of Women's Clubs**

"The cooperation we get from the Cleveland Public Library in books and films is 100 per cent. These bookmarks, you know, originated in Cleveland. The library people preview the films and select the ones they wish to feature in this way. Another film project of the Cleveland Library has been the taking of a series of still pictures in Hollywood (I think about 200 pictures) showing all the different steps in the making of a motion picture. I believe they will be available soon for circulation, and that arrangements are being made to put them into book form.

"In our Federation book-film cooperation we devote one program to Book Week. We had one on *Drums Along the Mohawk*, making a comparison between the book and the story as told in the motion picture."

**Mrs. M. Eaton Briggs, Chairman,
Photoplay Guide, Burlington (Vt.)
Motion Picture Council**

"Our Guide first started in 1932, and was written up by different members in their own homes. Later, permission was obtained to keep the files and do the work at the public

library. There, one afternoon a week, the chairman and an assistant write up the reviews of the pictures for the coming week."

**Mrs. Harry G. Grover, Honorary
President, Rutherford (N. J.)
Inter-Club Council**

"We have had splendid library cooperation. We used to get out a bookmark on every fine picture. These were paid for by the theatre and distributed in the theatre and in the library. For 15 years our library has had the Photoplay Guide information available for the public. The library also answers questions from people wanting to know about pictures. At times there have been displays on the center table of books relating to certain good pictures, and books on motion picture appreciation are available on special shelves."

**Mrs. William J. Massa, Vice-President,
Staten Island (N. Y.)
Better Film Council**

"The libraries have set aside shelves for books, pamphlets and announcements of the pictures, and a bulletin board on which stills are displayed. As the pictures move to the different houses the stills and data are sent to the library nearest the theatre in which the picture is to be shown. These are for the outstanding pictures and generally relate to books on the library shelves. Our Guide is also placed in the libraries."

**Mrs. Samuel B. Cuthbert, past Motion
Picture Chairman, Allegheny County, Pa.,
Federation of Women's Clubs**

"Our experience with libraries is that they are most cooperative. They are anxious to have the bulletins of the coming pictures in their libraries and are also quite willing to put in bookmarks which have been prepared ahead of the picture as advance publicity. Any stills or lithographs that we have of the coming pictures are also gladly received. They will order, because of the demand, extra copies of books that have been filmed."

Write to the National Board for the "Selected Book-Film" (see page 19) or other helps, and let us know what you plan for Book Week.

Pictures at Columbia University

THE Institute of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University has announced a series of eight Monday evenings devoted to the subject "Life Today and the Film," presenting a selection of the finer documentary pictures that have genuine educational and cultural content. A more detailed announcement of this series will be given out later. Also among the talks in the series "The World of the Arts," will be one by William deMille on "The Art That Has to Be an Industry," on January 23rd, and one by John Van Druten on "An Author in Hollywood," on March 6th.

Motion Picture Courses

THE School of Education of New York University offers for the seventh year its well-known course on The Motion Picture, given by distinguished lecturers under the joint auspices of the University and the National Board of Review. This course is directed by Dr. Frederic M. Thrasher and is especially useful to the teacher, the social worker, and the layman working in community motion picture programs, because it discusses practical problems of schools, social agencies and community organizations in relation to both entertainment and educational films. One session of the National Board of Review Conference is held each year in connection with the course, which is given in the School of Education auditorium, Washington Square, New York City.

Scenario Writing and Production is one of the well established courses in Dramatic Arts again being offered by Columbia University, University Extension. The course is under the direction of Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson.

Dr. Thrasher is a member of the Board of Directors, and Mrs. Patterson a member of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee of the National Board of Review.

Readers - Please Answer!

WHAT would you like our magazine to be that it isn't, to make it completely satisfactory as a family magazine for people who want, for themselves, their families and their communities, reliable information about pictures, their values and uses, and the men and women who make pictures? We are planning to enlarge and improve the National Board of Review Magazine, and suggestions will be welcomed that will help make it unique among periodicals devoted to the best in entertainment, educational and social films.

In Camera

(Continued from page 14)

ments in *Time in the Sun*, and Tisse's brilliance makes the film worth seeing for their sake alone.

These moments of beauty appear time and again through the first thirty minutes of the film, and in themselves they are little masterpieces. The trees and deserts of Mexico, the foods and fruits, the brilliant dresses, laces and headgear, the religious processions and the incredible masks of the symbolic dancers—all these present themselves so effectively and penetratingly that we are often ready to lose ourselves in their poetry and forget all such critical considerations as continuity and unity. Whatever may be said of the film as a whole, and however it may be assembled and edited, the artistry of Tisse can never be under-rated and the credit for the great beauty in *Time in the Sun* must be given essentially to him.

N. D.

Remember the New

CONFERENCE DATES

NOVEMBER 14TH-16TH, 1940

Hotel Pennsylvania

New York City

(Continued from page 2)

- fj KIT CARSON—Jon Hall, Lynn Bari. Original screen story by Evelyn Wells. Directed by George B. Seitz. An exciting western with Kit Carson, the famous scout, taking charge of a wagon train and bringing it safely through the Shoshone country to California. United Artists.
-
- m LADY IN QUESTION, THE — Brian Aherne, Rita Hayworth. Based on the story by Marcel Achard. Directed by Charles Vidor. A kindly and unusual story about a warm-hearted juror who takes a destitute girl into his own family after his influence has won her acquittal on a murder charge. Gradually but inevitably circumstances set the stage for an almost exact repetition of the tragedy in which he first found her, but this time with himself and his own children involved. The setting is French and the film follows exactly the French production "Heart of Paris," shown here a year or two ago. It has the slow, steady movement of an European movie, but its sympathy with the characters and romantic atmosphere make it likely to appeal to "older minded" members of the family as well as to adults. Columbia.
-
- f LEATHER PUSHERS — Richard Arlen, Andy Devine. Original screen story by Larry Rhine, Ben Chapman and Maxwell Shane. Directed by John Rawlins. An amusing comedy of prize fighting for fight fans. An up and coming fighter is double-crossed by his manager and raffled off. A young newspaper woman gets the lucky number and becomes his manager. Universal.
-
- m *LUCKY PARTNERS — Ronald Colman, Ginger Rogers. Based on the story "Bonne Chance" by Sacha Guitry. Directed by Lewis Milestone. A thoroughly frivolous and delightful story about a young girl who is given a share in a sweepstake ticket on the condition that she take a trip with the donor—an eccentric young artist—if the horse comes in. It does, and despite being engaged to a heavyweight business man she sets off to Niagara with the artist, ending up in a tangle of misunderstandings, court proceedings and romantic problems. Full of witty and absurd situations, with dialogue to match, and directed with unusual deftness. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. RKO Radio.
-
- f MEN AGAINST THE SKY—Richard Dix, Wendy Barrie, Kent Taylor, Edmund Lowe. Original screen story by John Twist. Directed by Leslie Goodwins. A comedy drama of aviation from the standpoint of production. Richard Dix as a ne'er-do-well aviator plays the hero by a daring feat which saves the manufacturer from ruin. RKO Radio.
-
- f MONEY AND THE WOMAN—Jeffrey Lynn, Brenda Marshall, John Litel. Based on the story by James M. Cain. Directed by William K. Howard. A triangle story with the heroine married to a bank robber, and her admirer a bank official who tries to straighten out the tangle without disgracing her name. Nothing new in itself, but smartly directed from a good script. Warner Bros.
-
- m NO TIME FOR COMEDY—James Stewart, Rosalind Russell. Based on the play by S. N. Behrman. Directed by William Keighley. The story of a young playwright who leaves his wife for a girl he believes to be his inspiration, only to discover that his real inspiration is his wife. An excellent production with sophisticated and clever dialogue. Warner Bros.
-
- m *PASTOR HALL—Wilfred Lawson, Nova Pilbeam, Seymour Hicks. Based on a play by Ernst Toller. Directed by Roy Boulting. A parallel of the case of Parson Niemoeller, only here the Christian preacher who would not accept Nazi principles ends by being shot instead of in a prison. A simple, direct and powerful drama, sometimes terrifying in its details and implications. In a good cast Wilfred Lawson stands out in a noble performance of the persecuted minister. A spoken introduction to the film by Mrs. Roosevelt is a rather unfortunate and discordant note. The English actors in a German setting are soon forgotten in the tense interest of the story. Recommended for libraries. (Audience classification on this picture includes young people of high school age). United Artists.
-
- f PUBLIC DEB. NO. 1—George Murphy, Brenda Joyce, Elsa Maxwell. Based on the story by Karl Tunberg and Don Ettlinger. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. The pretty heiress to a huge soup fortune develops a passion for Communism and it takes rough treatment at the hands of her rugged boy-friend to get her back to normal and put the soup business on its feet again. Pretty shallow as satire and "Americanism," but has plenty of laughs and comic situations. 20th Century-Fox.
-
- f RANGE BUSTERS, THE — John King, Ray Corrigan, Max Terhune. Original screen story by John Rathmell. Directed by Roy Luby. Three rangers capture the mysterious phantom who is trying to scare the owners of a ranch to get possession of it. Phoenix.
-
- f RANGERS OF FORTUNE—Fred MacMurray, Albert Dekker, Patricia Morison. Original screen story by Frank Butler. Directed by Sam Wood. A melodrama of pioneer days. The adventures of three men who escape from a firing squad. Well done and above the average Western. Paramount.
-
- m TIME IN THE SUN—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 14.

- f TRIPLE JUSTICE — George O'Brien, Virginia Vale. Original screen story by Arnold Belgard and Jack Roberts. Directed by David Howard. Has all the ingredients of the average Western, but they are well assembled and the whole production is handled with a care unusual for this type of picture. George O'Brien does a good job as the cow-hand who rounds up the bank robbers single-handed. RKO Radio.
- f WYOMING—Wallace Beery, Ann Rutherford, Leo Carrillo, Marjorie Main. Original screen story by Jack Jevne. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Wallace Beery meets up with General Custer and between them they rid the Wyoming lands of rustlers and land-grabbers. Beery plays his usual role of the bad man with a heart of gold and keeps the entertainment value high with a first-rate mixture of comedy, drama, romance and snappy gunplay. A picture for all Beery fans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f YOUNG PEOPLE—Shirley Temple, Jack Oakie, Charlotte Greenwood. Original screen story by Edwin Blum and Don Ettlinger. Directed by Allan Dwan. The story of three vaudeville troupers—mother, father and young daughter—who decide to leave the footlights and settle down on a farm in a small New England community. Their efforts to live up the town and get to know everybody are a dismal failure until Jack Oakie proves himself a hero in the recent hurricane. Likely to be entertaining for Shirley's fans—but not so popular with New Englanders. 20th Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f BARON AND THE ROSE, THE (Passing Parade)—The entertaining story of "Baron" Henry Stiegel, the Philadelphia blacksmith who turned glassblower and made and lost a fortune. A real American story, well told and most unusual in its material. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f CAPITAL CITY—Traveltalk with beautiful views of Washington. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj DIVING DEMONS (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A very lovely picture of expert diving done entirely in slow motion, with some comedy diving thrown in for good measure. Paramount.
- fj GOING PLACES NO. 81—A timely picture. Cruising to South America with the Coast Guard on their annual training cruise. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 82—"The Valley of Sunshine," the Sawtooth country of Idaho. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES NO. 83—"Tucson Trails," a trip through Arizona and into Mexico City. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Universal.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 1 (Second Series)—The famous radio program brought to the screen with Anna Neagle as guest. RKO Radio.
- f ISLE OF MYSTERY (Father Hubbard's Alaskan Adventures)—Showing the activities of the glacier priest among the sea lions and birds of a little known rock in the Aleutian islands. 20th Century-Fox.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 13, THE (6th series)—"Gateways to Panama," an excellently instructive picture of the bases in the Atlantic from which the Canal could be defended. Much detail about Devil's Island in French Guiana.

Directly in line with March of Time's propaganda for preparedness against Nazi Germany's possible designs on the Western Hemisphere. RKO Radio.

- f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 1—Disaster trucks fitted for any emergency; the breeding of small cows which eat less but give as much milk; the treating of textiles to resist water and stains; the training of carrier pigeons for war service. Paramount.
- f QUAIL QUEST (Pathe Sportscope)—A day's quail shooting in Carolina, done with special attention to the intelligence and ability of the bird-dogs. RKO Radio.
- f SOAK THE OLD (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—Exposing an old age pension racket run by three crooks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION Nos. 81, 82, 83—Strange occupations and hobbies. Universal.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE NO. 5—"The Archives"—An interesting tour of the building in which precious government manuscripts and original documents of state importance are conditioned and stored. Recommended for schools and libraries. Columbia.

MUSICALS, NOVELTIES AND SERIALS

- f HATS (Reelism)—Sheila Barret in an amusing travesty—maybe it's realistic—on a woman buying a hat. RKO Radio.
- fj JUNIOR G-MEN (Serial) Nos. 7-12. Billy Halop, Hurtz Hall, Gabriel Dell. Original screen story by George Plympton and Basil Dickey. Directed by John Rawlins and Ford Beebe. The Junior G-Men capture the leader of the Torch gang and win honor from the F.B.I. Universal.
- f KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED (Serial) Nos. 1-2. Allan Lane. Based on the novel by Zane Grey. Directed by William Witney and John English. A promising beginning of a serial which concerns the efforts of the Canadian Mounties to discover and foil the plans of enemy agents in the present war. Sergeant King is the hero who supplies the title. Republic.
- f PICTURE PEOPLE NO. 1—Hollywood stars, their pets and hobbies. RKO Radio.
- f PLEASE ANSWER (Pete Smith Specialty)—An intelligence test for the motion picture audience. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 9—Round-up of stars as they sit watching the sports in Hollywood stadiums. Columbia.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj LUCKY DUCK, THE (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—The cock and the hen spurn the baby duck until he saves their child from drowning. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj PUTTIN' ON THE ACT (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye and Olive Oyl go in for vaudeville. Paramount.

Selected Book - Films Wanted

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James Shelley Hamilton

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

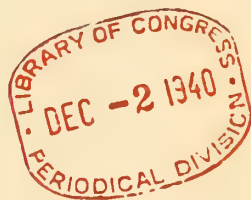
Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. XV, No. 8



November, 1940



Chaplin as the barber in "The Great Dictator" (See page 10)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

m ANGELS OVER BROADWAY—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Thomas Mitchell. Original screen story and direction by Ben Hecht. A man bent on suicide meets an out-of-work dancer, a down and out confidence man and a drunken playwright. All three for different reasons try to help him out of his difficulties. Clever plot and amusing dialogue. Mitchell is excellent as the inebriated dramatist. A Crooked poker game provides much terror and suspense. Columbia.

f ARISE MY LOVE—Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland. Original screen story by Ben Glazer and John S. Tolby. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. The romance of a pretty young columnist and the boy she saves from the firing squad, and their adventures in Europe during the present war. Well acted and amusing in spots. Paramount.

fj CHEROKEE STRIP—Richard Dix, Florence Rice. Original screen story by Bernard C. Conville. Directed by Lesley Selander. A better than average western. The story deals with the settling of the land, known as the Cherokee Strip, which the government granted the homesteaders, and the struggle of a United States marshal to bring law and order to the community. Paramount.

f CHRISTMAS IN JULY—Dick Powell, Ellen Drew. Original screen story and direction by Preston Sturges. A victim of a practical joke, Dick Powell believes he has won a slogan contest and only finds out how he has been duped after he spends most of the money. Paramount.

f CITY FOR CONQUEST—James Cagney, Ann Sheridan, Arthur Kennedy. Original screen story by Aben Kandel. Directed by Anatole Litvak. The theme of this picture is

the rise of the youths of New York's East Side from poverty to stardom, and how they fall back into poverty again when their brief glory is over. Cagney, as the rising young boxer, carries his part as well as ever and gives much to a picture that is overloaded with sentimentality and platitudes. The really entertaining moments, when they come, are vivid and exciting. Warner Bros.

f DIAMOND FRONTIER—Victor McLaglen, John Loder, Anne Nagel. Original screen story by Edmund L. Hartmann and Stanley Rubin. Directed by Harold Schuster. A story of the diamond mines in Africa. A man falsely accused of stealing diamonds is sent to the penal camp from which he escapes and returns to prove his innocence. Universal.

f *DISPATCH FROM REUTERS, A—Edward G. Robinson, Edna Best. Based on a story by Valentine Williams and Wolfgang Wilhelm. Directed by William Dieterle. A fascinating biographical study of the man who built the famous news agency. It concentrates on that part of Reuter's life concerned with the struggle to launch his pigeon service, his short-lived success and his final triumph and vindication. The picture is beautifully directed and acted against the charming background of mid-nineteenth century Germany and England. It has thrills, suspense, romance and pathos. Recommended for schools and libraries. Warner Bros.

f DOWN ARGENTINE WAY—Don Ameche, Betty Grable, Carmen Miranda, Charlotte Greenwood. Original screen story by Rian James and Ralph Spence. Directed by Irving Cummings. A scintillating and highly entertaining musical comedy with most of the settings in romantic and beautiful Argentina. A wealthy girl goes to the Argentine to buy horses and there finds love and romance. Excellent dancing and singing with nice music, done in Technicolor and a splendid picture for horse lovers. 20th Century-Fox.

j GAY CABALLERO, THE—Cesar Romero, Sheila Ryan. Original screen story by Walter Bullock and Albert Duffy. Directed by Otto Brower. A sort of Robinhood story. The Cisco Kid protects an Englishman and his daughter against a scheming woman who wants to keep her land. 20th Century-Fox.

f GODA VANNER OCH TROGNA GRAN-NAR (Good Friends and Peaceful Neighbors)—Eric Abrahamson, Ludde Gentzel. Original screen story by Torsten Lundquist and Weyler Hildebrand. Directed by Weyler Hildebrand. A tailor and a shoemaker live a peaceful life in Stockholm's Bohemian quarter until interrupted by their children's falling in love with each other. A fairly pleasant but unimportant family story, with most of the pleasure in the dialogue and consequently of little appeal to any but Swedish audiences. No English sub-titles. Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

(Continued on page 17)

NOV 14 1940

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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New Frontiers for American Movies

IN other days we entertained the whole world with our American movies—entertained, and who can tell how much we taught? For what people learn is by no means to be measured by what they consciously pack away in their minds from deliberate study, or what they can afterwards set down quantitatively on an examination paper. Some of the most potent influences in life are absorbed rather than learned, absorbed when we are least aware of absorbing, and who can know what millions of men and women and children, sitting silent in thousands of darkened movie houses, their minds all relaxed and receptive, have taken into their inner picture of life from the light-and-shadow figures on the movie screen?

The world has its picture of American life from our motion pictures, and that must have its subtle effect. But now we are cut off from a great deal of the world—it is no longer our audience. Until there is free movement of ideas and trade among the nations again, the motion picture has little space outside our own hemisphere to operate in. What can it do in this half-a-world—what can it do at home now we are our own chief audience?

The cultural relations and interchanges with Latin-American people will be studied and guided by specialists selected for that end. It won't be a matter of just this year, or next, but a long growth in which the motion picture will have a very important part. But what new frontiers are there to be crossed within our own borders, to keep the picture

business from contracting in the same proportion as our world-trade has contracted?

We are a movie-going country, but everyone knows people who go to the movies only once in a while, or not at all. And what comes and will come over the air to us makes it more and more easy to be in touch with both the gaiety and seriousness of the world while we are sitting comfortably at home. But there is a vast audience that can be lured to the movies. Only they will have to be lured. And it will take something new to lure them. The picture people do what they do extremely well, but there are hordes of folks who want something besides that: they are folks who remember plots, and recognize them no matter what new dress and new trimmings they appear in, and they are tired of them. They are not looking particularly to be edified or uplifted, just to be entertained. It is because they want to be entertained that they don't want to be bored—and the same old story-skeletons, for which they have an x-ray eye, bore them terribly.

It is obvious that a kind of movie which isn't made for the theatres, merely to entertain, is increasing in number and in scope—the fact-film, made by industrialists, by the government, by social foundations, to inform and instruct. They are not entertainment films, though they are so much dead celluloid if they are not entertaining to the extent of being interesting. The dramatic films have time and again, with sometimes sensational success, gone to the news headlines for their material. Gangster films, G-men films, came

as fresh stuff, and people flocked to see them, till they got so repetitious they were tiresome. In these fact films there is fresh stuff too, from which dramatic, fascinating and close-to-our-lives stories can be made for the screen. In working with that material fresh talent will emerge, among writers and directors. Why not try it—as we have been going

into our past history for the films, why not go into our living history?

Of course the makers of movies, who are every bit as alert about their business as any of their critics or advisers, have already thought of this. But their need of new audiences and new material ought to spur them beyond the point of merely thinking.

Observations of a Director

This is not an article, but notes selected from the stenographic report of an informal talk given by Garson Kanin at New York University to the students of the Motion Picture Course, as an introduction to a showing of his picture, "Bachelor Mother," on October 17, 1940.

I have been lucky. Very often I have been asked not only by the press but by other people, how I got started, and the easiest way is to say that things broke right, and believe me they did. But I have tried to tell them what I did to prepare myself for the job of making a motion picture.

I worked in the theatre for some time, and I was working for George Abbott who was a very fine teacher indeed. Mr. Abbott is offered 200 plays a year to direct and he is unable to do it. People who could not get Mr. Abbott to direct would turn to me, and I was able to get some plays to direct. But shortly after that I was offered a job to work for Samuel Goldwyn, a fabulous character who operates on our shores, and I went out to talk to him about working in his organization. One of the first things he told me was that Sidney Howard tells him that I was a genius and the second thing he said was "you look like Irving Thalberg."

And so I went to work for him. Then he called me in and said "what do you do?" I said I was a director and he was surprised and said he could not entrust a large amount of money to me for a picture. And then it occurred to me that I could best employ my time by starting to consume information about the job. Apparently Mr. Goldwyn was not going to let me do anything, and so I very systematically started a study of the motion picture. I tried to learn if there was any place in Hollywood where cutting and cinematography were taught, and there was no

such place. There was no place to learn about cutting which is one of the most important things in assembling material. Cutting does not mean cutting out but cutting in—montage is the word—the mounting, the assembling of film in some balanced sequence—the putting together of the small pieces, the thousands of small pieces, to gain an effect.

And then I took the next step—learning how other directors work. I don't believe you can learn anything about making pictures by watching them made. I do believe you can learn about motion pictures by watching the picture when it is finished. You take one picture that you consider good and see it enough times and you learn a great deal more about the film than a director could tell you. Many directors would be at a loss to tell why certain shots are as they are; it seems right, but none of us can completely describe our own work as we would like to. But if you see a work which you think is effective you can easily see why; you can see the shots, the camera angles, how it is cut, something about the performances. How to achieve those effects is not quite so important because you always have a great deal of technical help along those lines.

* * * * *

In the discussion of the film as we know it, we must be very careful to differentiate between films as a business, between films as an industry, and films as an art form, films as a literary medium. Because of the existence of the living theatre, we find ourselves frequently entering into a discussion of the theatre and the movies and I try to make it quite clear that there are two discussions and not one. Broadway as opposed to Hollywood—that is one argument, and you must consider

the film as opposed to the theatre. For my own purpose I would much rather work on Broadway than in Hollywood. But on the other hand I would rather work with film than in the living theatre. I think the film is superior as a dramatic literary medium. For one thing if we are to return to Shakespeare and the purpose of the theatre, it is to hold the mirror up to nature, and I insist that the mirror can be held better by the movies than by the theatre. You can go further. Daily lives do resemble more the movies than the stage play. You sit in a theatre and on the stage you see life with one of the four walls removed—that is quite unnatural. With a camera we can see any scene as it would be seen by you as if you were part of that scene. The scope is much more.

But working in the films as opposed to working in the theatre leads us into a comparison of the two industries, and I am led to believe that I would rather work in the theatre. The theatre has a greater audience appreciation. The theatre for another thing has a complete lack of censorship, and the third thing is if you do an inferior piece of work in the theatre, not many people see it, but a great many people see it in the films.

* * * * *

Motion picture producers insist that motion pictures must be entertainment. But I have often felt that the motion picture even as an industry to survive must learn to get beyond "entertainment." I know that an entertainment medium as such can perish very easily. We have seen it happen with vaudeville, which was a greater industry employing more people and more money, and vaudeville has become an obsolete form, because it was only an entertainment form and something came to take its place. Miniature golf involving millions of dollars and millions of people, and mah jong are entertainment forms. Instead of thinking of the motion picture as an entertainment form, it should be considered as an art form—an art form cannot perish. If we are able to make the motion picture an art form rather than an entertainment form it will live. If it is to be simply a diversion, I assure you that the time will come when it will perish. The question now is television. Many of us will find ourselves well equipped to work with

television. The need for film will be even greater when television comes. There is not enough television to do anything without film. 50 sets, 25 stations. There would have to be 25 cameras. Television will be for sport events but entertainment will be from film. Even with sport events, a thing that is happening at the moment has to be seen at that moment. If we are engaged in our work we cannot see the Yankees playing the Red Sox, but if that is put on film and later televised, we can get the advantage of having been there.

* * * * *

I would say that each director's function differs. I can tell you something about my own work and I can tell you something about the work of other directors, but you must realize that this has not to do with every director.

The highest form of picture making is exemplified by Capra, Ford and McCarey, who can start with an idea. I had to stop and not include myself. It has to start with an idea and working very closely with the writer in the preparation of the script, and then shooting, and then putting it together. Of those three major phases, the first and third are the most important. Shooting a picture is a routine job if the script is pretty well worked out. The putting together of a picture is very difficult. A scene that looks good on the set may look bad on the screen.

On the whole I would say that the director's function was to tell the story. Not to write the story, not to conceive the story, but to tell it. Directors are the story-tellers of the present generation.

Norman Krasna did the script of *Bachelor Mother*, and we worked with a small idea. Felix Jackson gets the original story credit, and it is true that Jackson did a story, but his form was not practical for our purpose. Norman called me and said he had an idea—a girl walks down the street and she sees an old woman put down a baby and she says "you can't do that" and the woman disappears and she takes the baby and everyone thinks it is her baby. I said "I think it will be very funny." I started to talk with him and we talked for three or four hours and we went to talk with the producer and we were able to talk him into it. We worked for five weeks

and we wrote nine stories and we took part of one and part of another and after it was finished the producer thought it was pretty good and so Norman and I prepared the script in sixteen days. The preliminary steps: story, first draft and second draft, were eliminated because the director and writer were working closely together. I can't write, I wish I could, but I cannot. But I can help a writer by telling him how he can best express the scene with a motion picture camera. In line with this, there is this story: Ben Hecht was working with McCarey on *Queer People*. At one part in Mr. Hecht's story the point to be made was that a man begins to fall out of love with his wife, and he had written a party sequence for it. The man and his wife give a party and during the course of this scene you learn that the man was falling out of love with his wife; but it was too long and it was not very interesting. He did a sequence with the man taking his wife out and in the course of that sequence you learn that the man was falling out of love, but it was too expensive, and so Leo did what was the director's contribution of finding out the way to do it. He was able to see the way in which this point could be made clear: the man and his wife had to go to see someone and they enter an elevator; there is no one else in the elevator; they are going to the 10th floor; it stops at the fifth floor and a woman gets in and the man removes his hat. That illustrates what the director can do in assisting the author of the story.

* * * * *

Film companies like to make pictures that will be money-makers. Certain studios like to make original stories and others like to make pictures from published sources. The reason they have drawn so much on published sources is because there are not enough original stories. We have not developed a writing craft for the film. Our writers are men who are former stage hands, newspaper men, actors, short story writers, and very few have been only film writers. A few young boys have grown up in the films and are doing a good job. Hemingway has a new book of 640 pages and he is already asking \$160,000 for the motion picture rights because it is good motion picture material. It has a strong leading male role and a good love story. Plays on Broadway interest the film com-

panies because they have had an audience. There is not any particular preference—they want a clear story easily understood and which will make a few million dollars.

* * * * *

The motion picture as a story-telling form can do one of three things—entertain, educate, inspire. I have no quarrel with entertainment, pure and simple. But even in *Bachelor Mother* people have called my attention to a kind of social comment. It is the Jewish landlady—she is not a bad person and she is not so good. She is just a human being. There is the tycoon, he is simply a human being. And the section manager. I have never made a picture with a villain. I don't think we can label characters good guys and bad guys.

Even in pure entertainment a certain educational quality can get into it. I do not agree on *Marie Antoinette*, *Suez* or any pictures that garble history even if they are good. Some films do have an educational effect and some don't, but all films should at least try.

Living History

A SERIES of significant and beautiful documentary motion pictures, presented by the Association of Documentary Film Producers and the Institute of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University, on ten Monday evenings in the McMillin Academic Theatre, Broadway at 116th Street.

November 4—HOUSING

Films: "Housing Problems," "The City," "Les Maisons de la Misère."

Discussion: Willard Van Dyke.

November 18 — PEOPLES OF THE EARTH (1)

Films: "Easter Island" and "The Earth in Song."

Discussion: Irving Jacoby.

December 2—WAR

Films: "China Strikes Back," "Spanish Earth" and "Siege."

Discussion: Joris Ivens.

December 9—YOUTH

Films: "Wild Boys of the Road," "The Case of Charlie Gordon" and "Youth Gets a Break."

Discussion: John Grierson.

(Continued on page 9)

The New Disney Film

WALT DISNEY'S new picture, *Fantasia*, will be specially shown during the Annual Conference of the National Board this year, because it is an important new step in the use of sound, which will perhaps be revolutionary in its effects on movie production. The film will be screened at the Broadway Theatre, one of the few theatres in the country equipped to exhibit it.

You may want to know what kind of movie *Fantasia* is. Well, we have the word of Mr. Disney and his staff that "it's just impossible to describe in the light of any past entertainment." We can, however, get a vague idea from reports on its contents and on the new methods that have been created for its projection.

The title, *Fantasia*, the final choice of thousands that had been suggested, was selected not only because it connoted fantasy but because as a musical term a "fantasia" means two things: a composition in which the composer strayed away from accepted form, and a potpourri of familiar airs; in a sense, both of these definitions fit *Fantasia*. In it a new fashion has come into being in musical interpretation and in the expressiveness of the cinema; in it also are presented a group of contrasting symphonic works which are fairly familiar to most people who listen to music. For *Fantasia* is an orchestra concert synchronized to a visual interpretation in color and form projected on a screen—a layman's interpretation, not that of a musicologist. Walt Disney is that interpreter. By listening to the music he sought to catch the ideas, figures and tonalities evoked in his imagination and to record them on film as animated color cartoons synchronized to the compositions.

The whole idea began rather modestly. Originally Disney planned to make a movie of Dukas' tonepoem, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," with Mickey Mouse as the hero. Leopold Stokowski was delighted with the notion and, with an orchestra of nearly a hundred musicians, he assumed the business of conducting the score. Soon, however, it was felt that so interesting a venture was somewhat slighted by being launched as a short

hardly ten minutes long. From all sides came suggestions urging a more ambitious production, and finally it was decided to animate for the screen an entire symphonic concert. Stokowski and Disney took the plunge with enthusiasm and called in Deems Taylor to help select a program.

The problem they faced was to choose musical works that would appeal to the huge movie going public, works keyed to a wide range of tastes and to various emotional planes. Deems Taylor's vast experience with the musical partialities of the American public proved valuable here. The program selected runs a gamut of moods, classical, whimsical, humorous, modern, pastoral, romantic and religious. It contains J. S. Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in B Minor," Tchaikowsky's "Nutcracker Suite," Dukas' "Sorcerer's Apprentice," Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring," Beethoven's "Sixth Symphony," Ponchielli's ballet music "The Dance of the Hours," Moussorgsky's "A Night on Bald Mountain," and Schubert's "Ave Maria"—in all a fairly husky concert.

Between March seventeenth and May fifth, 1938, Stokowski and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra recorded over 420,000 feet of music. In Hollywood the music editors, selecting the best "takes," reduced this to 18,000 feet, in which, thanks to a marvellous job of cutting, appears as perfect a recording of the eight compositions as any orchestra could possibly make.

Meanwhile Disney and his artists, with a rough track of the recording for reference purposes, went to work on the visual interpretations. The demands made on Disney by so diverse a program of "pure" and program music evoked a new and rich array of designs from his fertile imagination. The film synchronized to the Bach "Tocatta and Fugue" was described by Thornton Delehanty of the Herald-Tribune, who saw the studio preview in Hollywood, as "a series of abstract patterns and forms, rising and falling, deepening, widening, narrowing and splashing out in a fusillade of colors according to the volume and configurations of the music." To the other pieces tangible figures are synchro-

nized; flowers, animals, human and mythological forms, depicting stories, impressions and patterns. Tricky camerawork is brought to an unprecedented pitch of virtuosity; the audience is whirled 300,000,000 miles through space, the earth is split open by convulsive earthquakes, colors unhampered by outlines are animated in a fashion heretofore unknown.

But this does not end the wonders of *Fantasia*. The really astonishing and indescribable part of the production is the altogether revolutionary type of dimensional sound worked out by Disney engineers and RCA Victor. The audience gets the illusion that the orchestra is actually playing in the theatre. Besides this the sound is flexible;

it can be made to issue from any desired part of the house, it can be followed as it springs forth from different parts of the screen. For example, in the final number of *Fantasia*, Schubert's "Ave Maria," combining orchestra and chorus, while the images dwindle and fade into shadowy gradations on the screen, the music suddenly sweeps around to the back of the theatre and envelops the audience. But really to be appreciated *Fantasia* must be experienced. In this New Yorkers and those visiting the city are fortunate, for the elaborate and intricate equipment needed to exhibit this latest creation of Walt Disney's art, limits the showing of the film to about a dozen cities of which New York has the honor of being the first.

For the Movie Student in New York

IF you drop in on the Museum of Modern Art about four any afternoon from now until the first of the year, you can see movies made by D. W. Griffith covering his work from 1907 to 1924. This is the most ambitious of the cinema exhibitions that the Film Library of the Museum has put on since it was founded five years ago. It includes "The Lonely Villa," Mary Pickford's second picture; "The Birth of a Nation;" "Way Down East;" and, perhaps to be timely, a post-war film depicting the tragedies of defeat and hunger in Central Europe called "Isn't Life Wonderful?" Besides the movies an elaborate display of material on Griffith as actor, producer and director may be seen in the Museum itself. Included in this is a projection on the wall of a sequence from his monumental film "Intolerance." Along with this exhibition Miss Iris Barry, the Curator of the Film Library, has just published an exhaustive book on the life and works of D. W. which may be purchased in the lobby of the Museum.

All of which is part of the unique job The Museum of Modern Art Film Library is doing to salvage the cinema and preserve a body of famous and representative films. Here the motion picture is treated as an art, to be collected and exhibited much as other museums collect and exhibit paintings and

sculpture. Until the Film Library was started in 1935 next to nothing had been done in this direction. Anyone pursuing research on the movies, an art hardly forty five years old, heretofore had run up against almost insuperable difficulties in verifying material. Unlike students in the other arts with galleries, museums and libraries at hand most everywhere, the cinema historian had to rely mainly on his memory, carrying impressions, in many cases, made years before, or on descriptions and criticisms surviving in journals and publications. Consequently the research staff of the Film Library is handed many a headache correcting errors in "standard" works and other critical writings, errors that naturally followed when pictures important in the development of the film had either been lost through neglect or early indifference or had lain in the vaults of producers, in most cases quite beyond the means or influence of the researcher.

The Film Library remedied all this by making available to those interested four services: the arrangement of the movies they possess into series shown daily in the Museum theatre; the rental of films to study groups for non-commercial screenings throughout the country; the maintenance of a large library of books, periodicals, scripts, movie stills and related material for the use

of the public free of charge; and the employment of a highly trained staff to supply bibliographies and other information on request.

For an altogether different purpose the Metropolitan Museum of Art maintains a cinema department as a further extension of its public education facilities. They make silent documentary films to be shown in connection with exhibitions in the Museum, and to be rented or sold. At the present time showings are held Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 3:30 in the Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park, because renovations are being made in the Museum lecture hall. They cover such subjects as art and life in ancient and modern Egypt, archeology, armour, antique firearms, early American interiors, pottery, stainedglass, tapestry, wrought iron, bronze sculpture, etching, dry point and chironical films on American history.

Leaving this we might take a peek at the more unusual pay-at-the-door movies one can see in New York during the month of November. The Miami Theatre, 6th Ave. and 47th St., purveys to the public a constantly changing program of old films, Pearl White serials, early Chaplin comedies, Valentino and loads of other late famous cinemimes. The same is true of the 48th St. Music Hall which to add to its other virtues is a beer garden. Then there are the foreign movies, the much talked of and witty farce, "The Baker's Wife" (French), at the World, 49th St. east of Broadway; the grim little love story, "Heritage" (French), at the Belmont, 48th St. east of Broadway; and some more of the famous Hapsburg tragedy, "Mayerling to Sarajevo" (French), at the Little Carnegie, 57th St. between 6th and 7th Avenues. For those with a taste for German films the 5th Avenue Playhouse, 66 5th Ave. at 12th St., offers the psychopathic murder study, "M," and the Thalia, 95th St. west of Broadway, presents "The Dreyfus Case." Other German movies can be seen at the 86th Street Casino, 210 E. 86th St., and the 86th Street Garden, 160 E. 86th St. "Terra di Nessuna" (Italian) appears at the Cinecitta, 8th Ave. and 44th St., and "Vivere" with Tito Schipa at the Cine-Roma, Broadway and 52nd St. Revivals of other films domestic and foreign are always taking place and can easily be located through the weekly lists

printed in "The New Yorker" or "Cue" on sale at most news stands.

1940 Book Week coinciding with the dates of the National Board Conference the New York Public Library will have three informal exhibits of material relating to books and films. Two of them will be in the main library at 5th Ave. and 42nd St., one in the lobby and the other in the Circulation Room. The third will be displayed in the Drama Room of the 58th St. branch. Conference guests may wish to visit these between sessions.

Particularly for Conference delegates arrangements have been made to take them behind the scenes of the National Broadcasting Company at Radio City for a glimpse at the mysteries of broadcasting and telecasting. Since many of the delegates make use of local stations in their Council work this should prove of some interest during their stay in New York.

Living History

(Continued from page 6)

January 20—SCIENCE

Films: "White Flood," "Moving X-rays," "Monkey into Man," and "Pond Life."

Discussion: Fairfield Osborne.

February 3—FARMING

Films: "Song of Ceylon" and "Land Without Bread."

Discussion: Jean Lenauer.

February 24—EDUCATION

Films: "And So They Live," "Spanish ABC," and "One Tenth of a Nation."

Discussion: Alice Keliher.

March 10—AMERICAN NEIGHBORS

Films: "Hot Ice," Herbert Kline's new Mexican film, Julian Bryan's new Brazilian film.

Discussion: Iris Barry.

March 24—LABOR

Films: "People of the Cumberland," "Valley Town" and "Men and Dust."

Discussion: Paul Strand.

Subscription for the series of ten: \$3.50 to members of the Association and Columbia students, \$5.00 to all others. Information about the availability of these films for other booking will be given by the National Board of Review.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Great Dictator

Produced, written and directed by Charles Chaplin. Photography, Karl Stuss and Roland Totheroh, musical direction, Meredith Wilson. Distributed by United Artists.

The Cast

People of the Palace

Hynkel, Dictator of Tomania.....Charles Chaplin
Napaloni, Dictator of Bacteria.....Jack Oakie
Schultz.....Reginald Gardiner
Garbitsch.....Henry Daniell
Herring.....Billy Gilbert
Madame Napaloni.....Grace Hayle
Bacterian Ambassador.....Carter de Haven

People of the Ghetto

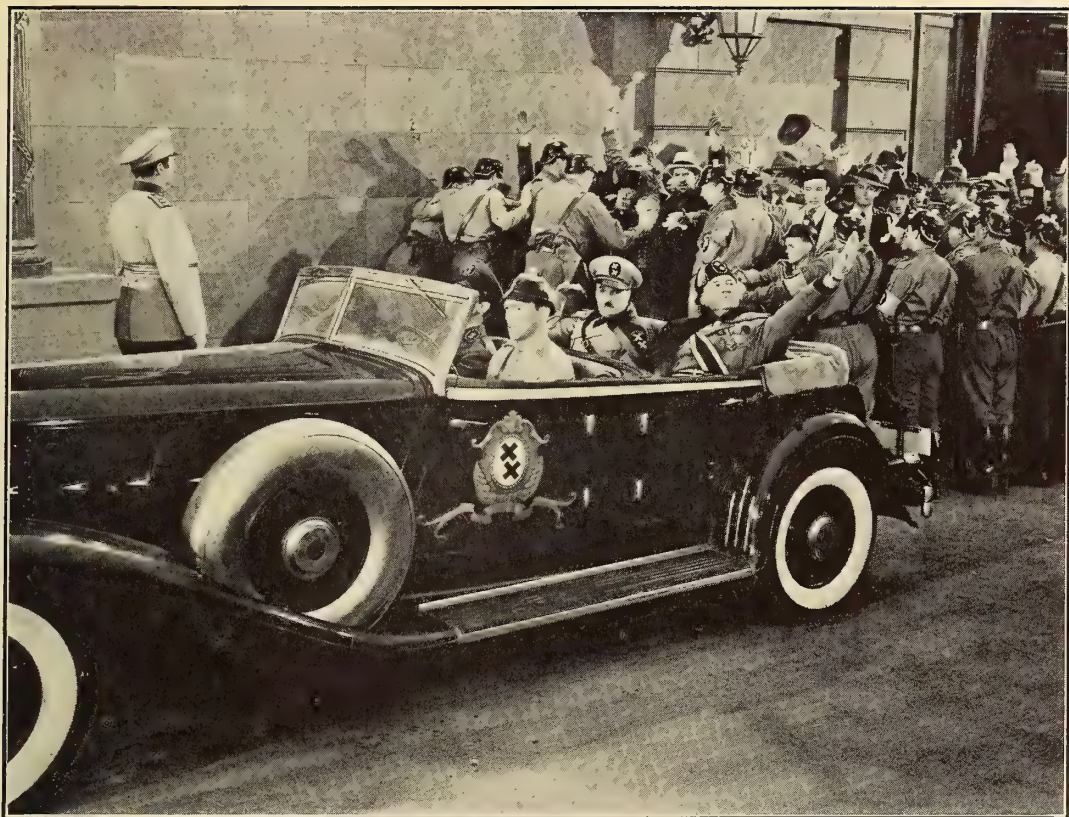
A Jewish Barber.....Charles Chaplin
Hannah.....Paulette Goddard
Mr. Jaeckle.....Maurice Moskovitch
Mrs. Jaeckle.....Emma Dunn
Mr. Mann.....Bernard Grocey
Mr. Agar.....Paul Weigel
Also: Chester Conklin, Esther Michelson, Hank Mann, Florence Wright, Eddie Gribbon, Robert O. Davis, Eddie Dunn, Nita Pyke, Peter Lynn.

A LOT happens in five years these days, and in that time you can learn a lot and forget a lot. That is why so many people who have been waiting for another Chaplin picture, made more and more impatient for it by delays and rumors, don't know quite what to think now that *The Great Dictator* is here. If it were just a new picture, and not a New Chaplin, they would enjoy it and acclaim it, as thousands upon thousands will anyway. But if they are among those who are always solemn about Chaplin, expecting him to be not only a great comic but a great tragedian and social commentator as well, they won't be satisfied with just taking what they get and enjoying it: they will have to ponder and analyze about Art and Meanings and Social Satire, with all their preconceptions about such things,

and the result of all this searching thought will perhaps puzzle them by not adding up to what they thought they were going to get in the Masterpiece they were all set for. This will be because of what they have learned, and even more what they have forgotten, in the years of waiting.

Movies have developed a good deal since *Modern Times*, and the world has changed even more, and unless you keep that pretty carefully in mind you don't realize the extent to which expectation of what a new Chaplin picture would be has subconsciously keyed itself up to a point that forgets what Chaplin has always been. Except for some of the two-reelers we don't get much chance to see Chaplin films after their season of newness is over, and so we have no chance to check our memory of them with all that was actually there. Chaplin—it's a temptation to say more than any other man in the world—is a figure that lives mostly in our memories, and what each remembers is shaped and colored by a personal reaction to him, all the more vivid for the personal feeling that infuses the memory. We remember him, and forget a great deal about his different pictures except as the frame in which he himself was so unforgettable.

The Great Dictator is its own kind of film, a completely Chaplin kind, and no other kind in the world. It is not only the climax of Chaplin, so far, but a resumé of Chaplin's whole growth, in his picture-making and in the evolution of his social conscience—a statement that is practically a quotation from Terry Ramsaye, who so far as I know is the only commentator who has noted this fact, as well as the fact that you



Chaplin and Jack Oakie as the rival dictators

must go back to Griffith's *Intolerance* for another motion picture that is so completely one man's personal expression of his attitude on something about which he feels deeply and passionately.

There is practically no plot: a Jewish barber looks so much like Hynkel (Hitler) that eventually he is mistaken for the dictator and finds himself in the dictator's shoes about to broadcast to the nation. The rest of the picture is the rambling, episodic sort of thing that a Chaplin picture has always been. There's the old Charley, hat, shoes, walk, with the old-time ragged gentility and gallantry, up against a world of mishap. (Ah, but here is a world of more than mishap, a world of colossal evil, and he can't just walk away from it, over the horizon, swinging his cane, to some new adventure). There are the same tumbledown settings, obviously just painted scenery. The same story-book girl, the object of his shy adoration. There are old gags, bobbing up like old friends,

with some new twist to them perhaps but bringing the same old laugh. All of the barber episodes are much as Charley has always been, slithering along on the fine edge between the funny and the sad, but always safely funny. From the prologue in the Old War (it might have been something out of *Shoulder Arms*), through the barbershop days when Hynkel forgot the Jews for a bit, till his escape from the prison camp in the uniform that made him mistaken for the Phooey, the picture might have been made before talk came to the films—it is, in truth, a lot like an early talkie.

But without talk Chaplin couldn't have been Hynkel. The gods in their wisdom made Chaplin hit upon a make-up from his earliest days that destined him to be the inevitable parody of Hitler in appearance, but something even higher in the right ordering of things bestowed on him the gift to conceive and utter the astonishing, devastating speech that spurts from his lips when he is Hitler

vocal. Every move of his as the dictator is absurd enough to be funny, and sharp enough to be a cutting exposure of some trait in the Fuehrer's mania, but the bitterest venom of his characterization comes out in the indescribable jargon, utterly untranslatable yet completely understandable, which is the utterance of Hynkel in his greatest furies, and which is certainly one of the most remarkable things that the talkies—or anything else—has ever presented in the form of speech.

The world-shadowing figure of Hitler—did you think it couldn't be brought down to the dimensions of a movie screen, pinned there to be laughed at, without lessening its horror? It can't be laughed away? A madman is no subject for farce? Take a look at Chaplin's Hynkel—and after you've adjusted it to what you expected, or hoped for, take another look. You're likely to find that Chaplin's genius, working subtly and artfully, has burned up to its greatest creation in this—not caricature—portrait. That it can be laughed at is perhaps useful: it puts this titanic demon into some proportion with other men, a creature that somehow, some time, can be swept aside.

The bit of plot in the picture landed Chaplin, the author, in a situation that just couldn't be resolved. When the little persecuted barber had to appear in the dictator's place before the world, what was there for him to do? Anything but a bombshell would fall flat. The only bombshell was for the picture to gather itself together—all its meaning and purpose—and speak straight out in the voice of Chaplin as the man who made it all. It may not seem in the character of the barber—it is emphatically in the character of the whole picture. What seems to so many an artistic aberration, and perhaps not the most eloquent oration ever uttered, is maybe the most useful thing about the film; and certainly Chaplin made this film not merely to amuse, but to stir. In that speech Charlot—Charley the little man—really found his voice, and millions of people will know the meaning of it.

It is easy to find technical shortcomings in *The Great Dictator*, ways in which it doesn't line up with the stream-lined slickness of continuity, photography, sets, lesser

characters, that have become a commonplace in our studios. As a job of picture-making Chaplin has been content to do things just about as he has always done them. He has been himself, but with a further reach. And his grasp has equalled his reach. What other man in motion pictures has put so much time, so much money, so many gifts, into the sincerest expression he could achieve of what he feels about the most important thing in the world today? That will be remembered long after all the other pictures of this year have been forgotten. J.S.H.

(Rated Exceptional)

The Long Voyage Home

Adapted by Dudley Nichols from four short plays by Eugene O'Neill, directed by John Ford, photographed by Gregg Toland, musical score by Richard Hageman. Produced by Argosy Corporation, presented by Walter Wanger, distributed by United Artists.

The Cast

Ole Olson	John Wayne
Driscoll	Thomas Mitchell
Smitty	Ian Hunter
Yank	Ward Bond
Cocky	Barry Fitzgerald
Donkey Man	Arthur Shields
Axel	John Qualen
Davis	Joseph Sawyer
Captain	Wilfred Lawson
First Mate	Cyril McLaglen
Second Mate	Douglas Walton
Limehouse Crimp	J. M. Kerrigan
Freda	Mildred Natwick
Joe	Billy Bevan
Scotty	David Hughes
Tropical Woman	Rafaela Ottiano
Bumboat Girl	Carmen Morales
Bumboat Girl	Carmen D'Antonio

BACK in the days when Eugene O'Neill had a middle initial and was writing little one-act plays instead of week-long chronicles, he did four short sea pieces about a British tramp steamer, the *Glencairn*, not particularly connected except in having the same characters in them all, the men of the ship's crew. In "The Moon of the Caribbees" the ship was at anchor in a West Indian harbor on a moonlight night, some native women were allowed aboard to sell fruit and they brought rum hidden in their baskets—there was drinking and dancing and fighting till the women were thrown off the boat by the ship's officers, and a man named Smitty had emerged as someone different



The coming of the airplanes in "The Long Voyage Home"

from his crew-mates, with some secret he was trying to forget in drink. In "Bound East for Cardiff" was a man named Yank dying of broken ribs that had punctured his lungs, and as he died he talked with his pal Driscoll about the place he had always wanted to settle down in, far inland away from the sea. In "In the Zone" the ship was stealing through mine-infested waters (this was in 1915) and some innocent but puzzling doings of Smitty got him suspected of being a spy, till his bunk-mates got hold of some old letters of his and found out the secret, and the tragedy, of his life. In "The Long Voyage Home" the crew was ashore, and a young Swede named Oley was leaving the sea to go back to his old mother and the farm in Sweden, but was shanghaied on to another ship.

Sketchy material, with not much of the stuff of ordinary drama in it, but the kind of thing that John Ford can put his teeth and his heart into. He has had the help of his

best collaborator, Dudley Nichols, to whip these rather talky plays into something really cinematic, and Gregg Toland's vivid camera to catch it for the screen.

It would be hard to say whether there is any definite drama in this inconclusive tale of homeless men on a ship: is the spell of the sea so strong that they can never escape it, though they are always dreaming of settling down in the homes they left or the homes they hope to find, or is there some weakness in themselves they can never shake off that keeps them always roaming, in one ship or another, like vagabond flying Dutchmen? Dudley Nichols has done some clever contriving to knit episodes together and build up peaks of interest and tension, but the story drifts instead of heading for a definite harbor: chance, however exciting the attendant details, is the final disposer of whatever ultimate outcomes there are, and the voyage, for most of the men, is all to be made over again—and yet again. Without Oley,

without Smitty, without Drisc, but essentially always the same.

But there is a rare lot of characters aboard the *Glencairn*, and whatever end they come to it is their daily lives that give this picture its unusual quality. Down in the focsle, on wave-swept decks, wherever they are caught, there's color to them, and real blood in them. Thomas Mitchell, John Wayne, Ward Bond, and those three Irishmen Ford uses whenever he can, Fitzgerald, Shields and Kerrigan—they're the right actor stuff for the rough but sentimental fellows that always come out so vividly under Ford's direction. Their fights and loyalties and tempers and easy tears fill up a day-to-day life that is vigorously human. Other people come in: the officers (and the Captain, done by Wilfred Lawson, is another staunchly acted character); the tropical women who point up briefly the woman-less world of these men at sea; the sinister figures in the port, creeping out of

dark places to prey on the paid-off sailors. But it is the men of the focsle, whom we know only by nicknames, so different and so alike, who make the ship alive, and its voyage interesting.

Ford always appears to like getting away from conventional stories, and every so often he does it by telling a story without any women in it. There was *Men Without Women*, and *The Lost Patrol*. In this kind of story he always goes back more noticeably to movie fundamentals: action to look at, supplemented wherever it is effective by sound but with never any more talk than the needs of plot or the expression of character require. For Ford learned his mastery before the sound-track came in, and when he does a picture for the love of it rather than as an assignment, he instinctively makes the camera the chief instrument of his picture-making.

Rated Exceptional

J.S.H.



A dramatic moment in "They Knew What They Wanted"

They Knew What They Wanted

Adapted by Robert Ardrey from Sidney Howard's play, directed by Garson Kanin, photographed by Harry Stradling, musical score by Alfred Newman. Produced for RKO-Radio by Erich Pommer, distributed by RKO-Radio.

The Cast

Amy	Carole Lombard
Tony	Charles Laughton
Joe	William Gargan
The Doctor	Harry Carey
Father McKee	Frank Fay
Mildred	Janet Fox
The R.F.D.	Joe Bernard
Ah Gee	Lee Tung-Foo
Red	Karl Malden
The Photographer	Victor Killian

THIS play of Sidney Howard's (in its day it won a Pulitzer prize, which then made it a desirable movie property) has been put on the screen twice before, but never before under its own title, and never before with such a straight-forward treatment of what gave it its real dramatic strength on the stage. There's a sex problem in it, which is probably what made the former versions of it dodge and detour, and here is proof that if sex is going to be treated seriously it is better to treat it honestly: it's not so likely, treated that way, to be exaggerated out of all proportion to other important things. Treated that way it escapes the spuriousness of steamed-up romanticism, and it escapes the comic leer and innuendo. Being honest about its subject, it's outside the interest and curiosity of immature people. This is a mature picture, and an unusual one.

Unusual because it takes the humanness of quite simple people and keeps it warm and hearty and even gay through some pretty shattering troubles. It makes big people out of these little people, by making them avoid old-fashioned tragedy through growing to see new values. It takes sin that is usually treated theatrically and cleans it up through heightened force of character and increased spiritual insight.

This all sounds pretty solemn, if not stuffy, but there is no other way of indicating how different *They Knew What They Wanted* is from the ordinary motion picture both in what it handles and how it

handles it. The picture is neither solemn nor stuffy.

There's a fat, down-to-earth, jolly Italian grape-grower in the California vineyard country who goes to San Francisco for a holiday, and in a cheap restaurant he sees a pretty girl he wants to marry. But he is too shy even to try to get acquainted with her. So he goes home and, because he can't write himself, gets his slightly more literate foreman to write a proposal of marriage to her. The girl is a waitress, tired of drudgery and a hopeless life of dreariness, who wants a home and security. She is even willing to marry, sight unseen, for that, with every honest intention of being a good and loyal wife. But before giving her final "Yes" she asks Tony for his photograph, and Tony is so scared his looks will spoil everything that he sends her, instead of his own, a picture of Joe the foreman. Joe is good-looking enough to give the girl a feeling of heart-interest in the purely business matter she is entering into. Her final "Yes" is given with enthusiasm—she is getting what she wanted with romance added unto it.

So sex comes into it. Joe is a casual but hot-natured Lothario, used to taking his fun where he finds it, who doesn't let friendship interfere too much with his fun, and when he meets the girl at the station and, mistaking him naturally enough for the man she is going to marry, she shows how ready she is to fall in love with him, his natural instincts flare up. The girl is humiliated by the realization of her mistake, and the result of it, but Tony's jubilation over his coming marriage has led him to exuberant celebration and reckless showing off, resulting in falling off a roof and breaking a couple of legs—miraculously not his neck. So she can't run away as she wants to, ashamed of herself, disgusted with Joe, and all her fine dreams of a nice home spoiled. Not till Tony is on his way to recovery. And his insistent demands to get married uncover everything. The respect and growing love for Tony that comes to her makes it more impossible than ever to deceive him. So we have the wronged man, the sinning woman, and the lover just slightly on the villainous side—a pretty conventional theatrical situation. But does Othello wind it up with an

orgy of killings? No, it is all settled quite sensibly, by an understanding padre and Tony's unquenchable good-heartedness. Amy does go away, but there's no doubt she will come back, they will be married, Tony will have what he wanted and she will have a better husband than she ever thought she wanted. Passion is put in its place in relation to more lasting affections, and one night of love—that old high-spot of the sex movies—isn't allowed to inflame a whole lifetime.

It is Garson Kanin's hand that keeps all this on a convincing level with an individual style of his own, constantly warming it with human qualities, lightening it with humor and gayety, getting to the bottom of things without over-emphasis. It is the most serious picture he has made, and it shows that his range is much wider, and loftier, than mere comedy or sentiment. You won't find any better directorial handling, from the mass movement with all its by-play of Tony's fiesta to the searching, revealing moments of characters confronting themselves. He has made a new Carole Lombard, a new Frank Fay, almost a new Charles Laughton. Probably no director can keep Laughton from acting at top pitch, and for a lot of people that is over-acting. In spite of his managing, amazingly, to be Italian.

Inevitably there is something flat and down-letting in the ending of the picture. Probably because we are conditioned to something snappier and more definite in dramatic endings. It leaves a feeling, too, that some issue of action has been obscured in a high flight of words. But how could it have been more logical, or more moral?

(Rated Honorable Mention)

J. S. H.

Heritage

(Aux Jardins de Murcie)

Adapted by Marcel Gras and Max Joly from the classic Spanish drama "Maria del Carmen" by Feliu y Codina, directed by Marcel Gras, photographed by Nicola Hayer and Marius Roger, music by Jean Poueigh and Allan Small. Produced by Marcel Gras, distributed by French Films Import Co., Inc.

The cast

Maria	Juanita Montenegro
Pencho	Vital
Xavier	Hubert Prelier
Domingo	Marcel Delaitre

Fuensantica	Annette Doria
The Doctor	Georges Mauly

HERITAGE has a refreshing newness about it, a welcome addition to the noted gallery of European landscapes the foreign film has already presented. It is not an important film, really, although it shows signs of becoming an absorbing document of Spanish peasantry under the yoke of a tightening vise that was to lead to the chaos and ultimate calamity of 1936.

It begins as a vivid panorama of the rich, crusty soil baking slowly into sterility under a constantly blazing sun; the tillers are unhappy because the water supply allotted them will not properly nourish the priceless earth, and rebellion is in the offing when rich land-owners are suspected of diverting part of the precious stream to their own uses. The focal point is the gaunt, blanched young farmer, popular with everyone, who has cultivated his bit of land lovingly. With any kind of luck at all, its rich abundance will buy him more, and she who loves him would marry him albeit she is coveted by the richest land-owner's unhappy son. The two suitors are already enemies, but this flares abruptly into violent hatred when the lover, suspicious of the acute water shortage, discovers the unwanted suitor stopping the flow and stealing the water. High up in the lonely dark hills there is a fight to a finish, with thief apparently killed suddenly and unexpectedly. Fearful, the farmer runs off, but his rival is not dead: a stiletto-like implement, recognizable as the farmer's, is found on the scene by the boy's father. Hovering between life and death, he is nursed back to seeming good health by the girl as a family friend, but his father can see that desire for her is what has brought him back to life. Despite her being another man's woman, the father is determined to save his son at all costs and produces the weapon he found, demanding she marry his son in exchange for it. Ultimately, the son finds out he can never recover from his injury and the film ends as the lovers escape in the opposite direction while the doomed man, disguised as the other, lures the police into chasing him to a mountaintop where they kill him, as he runs from ambush, believing him to be the farmer.

Unfortunately, from the episode of the



The girl and her two suitors against the Spanish background of "Heritage."

fight, the colorful background begins to fade and the film settles into a rather commonplace complication involving four personalities alone, and while it never becomes altogether static, it takes on more and more of the aspects of a movie situation. That it never quite *looks* that way is due to the actual Spanish locale, the entire cast and crew having gone to Spain on location and, according to report, finishing their work only two days before the outbreak of the war; to the equally authentic Spanish types that rarely reach our screens, certainly not *en masse*; and to some notable touches devised by director Marcel Gras, formerly assistant to Pagnol. There are suggestions of Pagnol in the development and inter-relation of the three male characters, but they remain just that; there is no attempt at analysis; but in the earlier sequences, striving to broaden the canvas and make his people puppets of a social diagram, Gras indicates a fluency of scene that Pagnol often lacks and which, developed throughout, might easily have produced an exceptional

film. It still remains quite superior to the usual competent film of the day, with its difference in scene and pace and unlike anything seen for many a moon except, perhaps, the results of Eisenstein's sojourn into Mexico: *Thunder Over Mexico* and *Time In The Sun*.

Rated Honorable Mention

J. McA.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- f *GREAT DICTATOR, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 10.
- f GREAT PROFILE, THE—John Barrymore, Mary Beth Hughes, Gregory Ratoff. Original screen story by Milton Sperling and Hilary Lynn. Directed by Walter Lang. A matinee idol who is past his best days is induced to play the lead in a soulful drama, sponsored by a wealthy business man who is in love with the authoress. How he tears her tragedy into shreds and puts it over as a comedy hit is told briskly and amusingly. The whole thing, of course, is written for Barrymore, who supplies most of the entertainment. 20th Century-Fox.

- m *HERITAGE (Aux Jardins de Murcie)—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 16.
- f HIT PARADE OF 1941, THE—Kenny Baker, Frances Langford, Hugh Herbert, Mary Boland. Original screen story by Bradford Ropes, F. Hugh Herbert and Maurice Leo. Directed by John H. Auer. A musical replete with fashion show, television, singing, dancing and Kenny Baker. Miss Boland and Hugh Herbert are up to their usual antics, she as the owner of a department store and he as the owner of a radio station. Mr. Baker manages the latter and the romance with charm and tunefulness. The picture ends with a fairly large musical ensemble. Republic.
- f *HOWARDS OF VIRGINIA, THE—Cary Grant, Martha Scott, Sir Cedric Hardwicke. Based on the novel, "The Tree of Liberty" by Elizabeth Page. Directed by Frank Lloyd. The beginning of American liberty as it involved the lives of a Virginia backwoodsman and his marriage with an aristocratic girl from the colonial capitol at Williamsburg. The events and principles of the Revolution are closely interwoven with the Howard family. A handsome and careful production, with stirring and moving episodes, in which Jefferson and Patrick Henry bear a part. Vivid as history, and Cary Grant and Martha Scott excellent in the personal drama. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Referred to the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays. Columbia.
- f *KNUTE ROCKNE—Pat O'Brien, Gale Page, Ronald Reagan. Original screen story by Robert Buckner. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. An exceptionally fine biographical study of the famous football coach. Throughout, the picture maintains a warmth that is never out of taste. Pat O'Brien looks surprisingly like the original of his character and turns in an excellent job of acting. The settings, church ceremonies and the football shots are beautifully realized. The music is exceptional; the humor satisfying; and the pace never flags. It's a football movie besides, that doesn't forget colleges are also seats of learning. Recommended for schools and libraries. Warner Bros.
- fj LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN, A—Gloria Jean. Original screen story by Grover Jones. Directed by Andrew Marton. A charming little story of a poor girl who rises to fame and fortune on the radio, only to find that money doesn't always bring happiness. Universal.
- m *LONG VOYAGE HOME, THE—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept. page 12.
- f NIGHT TRAIN—Margaret Lockwood, Rex Harrison. Original screen story by Gordon Wellesely. Directed by Carol Reed. An exciting story of the present war. The English secret service sends a young man to Germany disguised as a German officer to help free an English scientist and his daughter who are being held by the Germans. Perhaps a bit improbable but still interesting. (English
- f *NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE—Gary Cooper, Madeleine Carroll. Original screen story by Alan Le May, Jesse Lasky Jr. and C. Gardner Sullivan. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille. A super-western done in Technicolor. The story deals with the war between the North West Mounted Police and the half breeds, who resent the coming of law and order to Canada. The story is interesting, the acting outstanding and the entire production lavishly done. Paramount.
- f POWER AND THE LAND—Commentary by Stephen Vincent Benet. Directed by Joris Ivens. A documentary film describing the effects of rural electrification on the lives and work of a typical farming family in Ohio. Magnificent photography and subtle direction have created out of ordinary farm chores and farm people a picture as moving in rhythm, color and lyricism as a tone-poem. It is a government film telling country people how to get electric power. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- fj *SPRING PARADE—Deanna Durbin, Robert Cummings. Original screen story by Ernst Marischka. Directed by Henry Koster. A light and pleasing story of old Vienna during the reign of Emperor Franz Josef. Ilonka, a young peasant girl, finds romance and adventure in the beautiful city of Vienna. The pictures move rapidly in cadence with the lovely Viennese waltzes. Miss Durbin is at her best as the unsophisticated little country girl. Universal.
- m *THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 15.
- fj THIEF OF BAGDAD—Conrad Veidt, Sabu, June Duprez. Original screen story by Lejos Biro. Directed by Ludwig Berger and Michael Powell. An Arabian fantasy from the well known "Thousand and One Nights" done in a lavish manner in technicolor. The adventures of a small boy. United Artists.
- f THIRD FINGER, LEFT HAND—Myrna Loy, Melvyn Douglas, Lee Bowman. Original screen story by Lionel Houser. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. An attractive and clever woman who thinks that by having a mythical husband she is more secure in her job as a magazine editor, gets into complications when a man comes along she really wants to marry. Original in idea and situations, with many laughs. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f TOO MANY GIRLS—Lucille Ball, Richard Carlson, Desi Arnaz, Eddie Bracken. Based on the stage play of the same name. Directed by George Abbott. An amusing comedy with a small western college as background for music and dancing. RKO Radio.
- f TUGBOAT ANNIE SAILS AGAIN—Marjorie Rambeau, Alan Hale, Ronald Reagan. Based on characters created by Norman Reilly Rains in Saturday Evening Post stories. Directed by Lewis Seiler. A sentimental and

amusing story. Tugboat Annie tries to avoid being retired as senior captain because of alleged incompetence, and comes through with flying colors. There is a slight love theme that Ronald Reagan handles well, a good many laughs and a nice line of snappy dialogue. Warner Bros.

fj UNDER TEXAS SKIES—The Three Mesquiteers—Original screen story by Anthony Coldewey. Directed by George Sherman. A lively western, without novelty in theme and content but briskly directed and constructed well enough to raise it above the average of this type of picture. Republic.

f WESTERNER, THE—Gary Cooper, Walter Brennan, Doris Davenport. Original screen story by Stuart Lake. Directed by William Wyler. Unusual in characterization, plot and pace—which though tense in effect is often slow in movement—this story of the violent struggle between entrenched cattlemen and incoming homesteaders in early Texas is full of fascinating detail and stout American humor. A tough but romantic judge whose idealization of Lily Langtry gets a town named after her, heads the lawless cattlemen whom Cooper defeats with craft and amusing cunning. There is an attractive and convincing heroine. United Artists.

f *WORLD IN FLAMES—An excellent documentary film reviewing world events for the past ten years. Historically interesting and effective as promoting preparedness. Recommended for schools and libraries. Paramount.

f YOUNG BILL HICKOK—Roy Rogers. Original screen story by Norton S. Parker and Olive Cooper. Directed by Joseph Kane. An above average western romanticizing the adventures of Hickok in foiling the schemes of foreign agents in the West during the last year of the Civil War. Raids, murders and holdups are nicely lightened by cowboy songs and a not overstressed love interest. Republic.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- f BOWLING FOR STRIKES (Ed Thorgersen's Sports)—The art of bowling is demonstrated in the hands of experts. 20th Century-Fox.
- f CAVALCADE OF SAN FRANCISCO (Fitzpatrick Travel-talk)—A bit about San Francisco—but mostly a pageant of one of the shows in the San Francisco Fair. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj FAMOUS MOVIE DOGS (Color Parade)—How dogs are trained for movie parts. Interesting and amusing; fine for children's matinees. Vitaphone.
- f FISHING IN HAWAII (Sport Thrills)—A travel film featuring aspects of native fishing by spear, hook and net. Columbia.
- fj FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS (Hollywood Novelities)—Knute Rockne's teachings and how they are followed at Notre Dame. Most interesting slow-motion studies. Vitaphone.
- f FULLBLOD—The training of thoroughbreds in a Swedish racing stable. Full of handsome horses. (Swedish language) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 2 (second series)—The "human encyclopaedias" with Ruth Gordon as a guest and very witty she is. RKO Radio.

- f JONKEPING—An interesting study of a famous Swedish match town and its surrounding countryside. (Swedish language) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f KENTUCKY ROYALTY (Pathe Sportscope)—Thoroughbreds, their home and education. There are some delightful pictures of a baby colt. RKO Radio.
- f KRING ODENAS SLOTT—A fine old Swedish castle, its grounds and lovely countryside. (Swedish language) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.
- f LAND OF FLOWERS (Magic Carpet)—Beautiful color scenes of Miami Beach and St. Augustine. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. 20th Century-Fox.
- f *MARCH OF TIME NO. 1, THE (7th series)—"Foreign Newsfronts"—An excellent summary of the present war from the newspaperman's angle and the trouble with news censorship. Recommended for schools, libraries and churches. RKO Radio.
- f MARCH OF TIME NO. 2, THE (7th series)—"Britain's R. A. F."—A study of the British air force in its struggle against Germany. Many thrilling shots of air fights. RKO Radio.
- f MARCH OF TIME NO. 3, THE (7th series)—"Mexico"—A dramatic survey of the present political and economic policies of our neighbor Mexico, with emphasis on her future relations with the United States. RKO Radio.
- f MIDGET MOTOR MANIA—Various aspects of auto racing in the midget car class. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj *NATURE'S NURSERY (Paraphrastic)—A most amusing and entertaining picture of some animal babies with a wise old owl as commentator. Paramount.
- f SAVING STROKES (Sport Thrill)—Sam Snead demonstrates his style on the golf course. Columbia.
- f SERVICE WITH THE COLORS (Technicolor Productions)—How a fresh rookie is broken in to Army life. Vitaphone.
- f SPORTING EVERGLADES, THE (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Fishing in the Florida Everglades. Paramount.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 1—Strange hobbies—the only woman hoot maker; making toy houses out of match sticks; making pictures by typewriter; the only woman fire chief; a well trained penguin. Paramount.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE NO. 6—"Our National Defense"—A survey of the present state of the armed forces of the United States. Columbia.
- f WITH THESE WEAPONS—A direct and effective informational film about syphilis, emphasizing how the disease can be cured and its spread prevented. Sane and unsensational, it is a useful film for its purpose, made under excellent auspices. Recommended for schools and libraries. American Social Hygiene Association.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f ACQUITED BY THE SEA (Believe It Or Not—Ripley)—It took the sinking of the Titanic to vindicate a man who had been convicted and served a prison term. 20th Century-Fox.
- f COMMUNITY SING NO. 7—Concert of current popular songs. Columbia.
- fj KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED (Serial) NOS. 4-10. Allan Lane. Based on the novel by Zane Grey. Directed by William Whitney and John English. Further adventures of Sergeant King and the Canadian Mounties in foiling plans of enemy agents. Republic.
- f MOMENTS OF CHARM OF 1941—Phil Spitalny and his all girl orchestra. (Technicolor) Paramount.

Cartoons and Comedies

- fj HOW WET IS MY OCEAN (Terry-Toon Color Cartoon)—The experiences of a pig who braves the ocean waves and goes for a bath. 20th Century-Fox.
- f LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—A color cartoon treating the Mayflower and its passengers in burlesque fashion. 20th Century-Fox.
- f WINDOW CLEANERS (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck goes through the terrors of window washing on a skyscraper. RKO Radio.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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December, 1940



Luise Rainer, Walt Disney and Dr. A. A. Brill at the November Board Luncheon.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f *ARIZONA—Jean Arthur, William Holden. Based on the story by Clarence Budington Kelland. Directed by Wesley Ruggles. An unusually fine Western telling the story of civilization coming to Tucson in vivid realistic terms. The film is a kind of artistic triumph on the part of the director who refreshes time-honored Western material, and in his triumph the actors, cameramen, and set designers participate. Columbia.

f BITTER SWEET—Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy. Based on the play by Noel Coward. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. The Technicolor is marvelous, particularly in the last fifteen minutes of the film, and the music, settings and the general production are tops. Principals do what they do in the usual way—and will be liked or otherwise according to personal taste. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f *BLACKOUT — Conrad Veidt. Original screen story by Emeric Pressburger. Directed by Michael Powell. A spy story that keeps you on the edge of your seat. Veidt is magnificent as the Danish sea captain and is supported by an excellent cast, which included a part of the British navy and personnel. The film is brisk in movement and full of subtleties in direction and setting, and the camera does a splendid job, especially on seascapes. (British production). United Artists.

f BLONDIE PLAYS CUPID—Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake. Original screen story by Karen de Wolf and Charles M. Brown. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. To avoid the terrors of the Fourth of July Blondie takes her family to visit her aunt in the country,

much to the disgust of Dagwood and the baby who are both partial to firecrackers. Trains missed, aid given to an eloping couple, a farmer with a shotgun added to the peculiar traits of Blondie's spouse, offspring and dog make a very entertaining comedy. Columbia.

fj CHARTER PILOT—Lloyd Nolan, Lynn Bari. Original screen story by J. Robert Bren and Norman Houston. Directed by Eugene Forde. The adventures of an ace commercial pilot and his radio actress heart-beat, establishing an air route in Honduras. The owner of the rival air line has a German accent and very inferior ethics. Snappy dialogue, Mr. Nolan and a real radio serial plane flight give this movie lots of thrills and merri-ment. 20th Century-Fox

m DR. KILDARE'S CRISIS — Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore. Original screen story by Max Brand and Willis Goldbeck. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. Young Doctor Kildare suspects his fiancé's brother of suffering from hereditary epilepsy, and his fiancé, fearing she may have the same affliction, hesitates to risk marriage. The wizard of the wheel-chair takes a hand, and all is settled to everybody's satisfaction. Metro Goldwyn-Mayer.

f EAST OF THE RIVER—John Garfield, Brenda Marshall, Majorie Rambeau. Original screen story by John Fante and Ross B. Willis. Directed by Alfred E. Green. A story of two boys brought up on the lower East side under the same conditions, one leaves home to lead a wild life, the other makes good, and both fall in love with the same girl. Warner Bros.

m*ESCAPE—Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor, Conrad Veidt, Nazimova. Based on the book by Ethel Vance. Directed by Mervyn Le Roy. An excellent thrill film about the escape of a famous actress from a German concentration camp, photographed against lovely sets of the Bavarian Alps. Suspense, pathos, romance and heroism, beautifully toned, are all present with fine acting, especially on the part of Philip Dorn and Conrad Veidt. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f *FANTASIA — Walt Disney Productions. (See Exceptional Photoplay Dept. page 11).

f HENNES LILLA MAJESTAT (Her Little Highness)—Sonja Wigert, Anders Henrikson. Based on the play by Karl Gerhard. Directed by S. Bauman. A bright and amusing story of a pampered society girl who accidentally becomes interested in the work of a young country clergyman. Her presence at the parsonage occasions much gossip—but leads to real happiness when Cupid goes into action. Good acting and effective photo-
(Continued on page 17)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The November Conference

THE Board's Seventeenth Annual Conference was held at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York from November 14th to 16th, with "New Frontiers for American Movies" as its theme. The change from February appears to have been a popular one. The Conference opened with a panel on community motion picture activities, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Lewis P. Addoms, of the Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn, who arranged her program in the form of a Year Book, to which contributions were made by Mrs. Frank A. Linzel of Washington, Mrs. Richard M. McClure of Chicago, Mrs. Arthur D. Kerwin of Detroit, Mrs. W. G. Kerr of Pittsburgh, Mrs. Richard K. Jones of Cleveland, Mrs. Leonard Rogers of Columbus, Mr. Alvin A. Gresens of Rochester, Mrs. Seth Talcott of New York, Mrs. Mary I. Baker of Jacksonville, Mrs. Charles W. Swift of Elmira, Mrs. Irma Erath of Staten Island, Mrs. Ralph Forsyth of Rockville Center, and Mrs. J. A. Yarbrough of Charlotte, N. C. Many other communities were represented by the Conference Committee and the delegates in attendance at the Conference.

On Thursday afternoon the delegates were guests of Walt Disney at the first public showing of his new film, *Fantasia*, at the Broadway Theatre. In the evening came a meeting with Dr. Thrasher's Motion Picture Course at New York University, where Richard Griffith of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library introduced presentations of three documentary films, Joris Ivens'

Power and the Land, Willard Van Dyke's *Valley Town*, and Paul Rotha's *The Face of Britain*.

Friday was given over to "The Movies as Entertainment and as Education," with Dr. Francis D. Tyson presiding in the morning and Dr. Walter W. Pettit presiding in the afternoon. In the morning Judge Stephen S. Jackson spoke on "Movies and Juvenile Delinquency," which is reprinted in later pages of this magazine, along with Oliver T. Griswold's talk on "Government Films." Mrs. Ralph T. Edwards spoke on "Children and Movies," and Vyvyan Donner started a discussion of how the films spread fashions with the emphasis on "Styles are Serious," which was resumed in the afternoon by Ilka Chase, who insisted "Fashions Can Be Funny." Mr. Mark Starr talked about "Adult Education Through the Movies," Virgil Thomson about "Composing for the Movies," and Margaret Thorp about "The Audience Discovers the Director."

Saturday morning came the Junior Session, presided over by Dr. Frank Astor, when Junior Reviewers and members of the 4-Star Clubs enacted, in the form of short plays, typical meetings of their organizations and showed movies of their own making.

Among the guests at the Twenty-sixth Annual Luncheon, Saturday, were Helen Craig, Irina Baronova, Judge Jackson, Aaron Copland, Luise Rainer, Dorothy Petersen, Lewis Milestone, Hal Leroy, Victor Mature, Vyvyan Donner and Walt Disney.

Mr. Disney, who insisted he couldn't

make a speech though he proved, delightfully, that he could, had said that he would rather answer questions if they could be given to him in advance. Some of his answers—there was not time for all of them—are highly interesting. As to whether *Fantasia* might eventually be broken up into parts to be shown separately, he said: "I do not believe it would be possible to do that. The equipment is so expensive it would be impossible to install it in a theatre to show just one subject. On top of that, I believe *Fantasia* is best appreciated when it is presented on a program of its own. I believe the audience is in an entirely different mood, and I think it is very important that the program be presented as we have presented it. I am going to fight hard to keep this music as it was planned and as it was created. The quality may not be obvious to a lot of people the first time, but I believe they will come back a second time. The second time you relax and really enjoy it because the music that is coming from the screen is the greatest music that has ever come from any screen. If the public does not like the pictures they can close their eyes and still go out satisfied they have had their money's worth."

In reply to a question, "Do you think ordinary human beings can ever go so well in animated pictures as animals and fantastic creatures?" Mr. Disney said: "That is a challenge. That is something we cannot avoid—there are so many things that demand that we have human beings. I know that at the present time we are more successful with the little fantastic creatures because there isn't comparison. I have no intention of trying to compete with human beings, but it is necessary that we find a way to picture human beings on the screen when they are unavoidable. We are working on that, and I feel sure that eventually we will be able to make them as convincing as anything else."

"Here is a question I would like to answer: 'Do you consider scenes like those in *A Night on Bald Mountain*, and in some others, terrifying to children?' That is a great problem, but I cannot design the pictures for a certain age. They have to have a very broad audience. I know there are children who come into the theatre who I

feel are a little young for motion pictures of any sort. I believe there is an age when the slightest moving object will frighten a child."

"We have had to learn—we are learning. I never thought that the big bad wolf would be criticized—but I was criticized and condemned for frightening children with the big bad wolf. The witch in *Snow White*—I tried to be very obvious with her. In fact, we had our tongue in our cheek. We were sort of kidding, in a way, but it fell flat—people took it seriously. If we were doing *Snow White* over we might do it differently."

"As to *Night on Bald Mountain*, I find that this thrills and excites. I notice that children in the audiences in New York are thrilled and excited, but I really think they are not terrified or frightened. It is the brooms and Mickey Mouse in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* that has that frightening effect on children—they are afraid Mickey will be hurt. What really affects them is when someone they like is in danger. In *Bald Mountain* there is no one they care much about."

In concluding this conference on "New Frontiers for American Movies" the following resolutions were adopted:

(1) WHEREAS: the Board's continuing policy and purpose is to seek to bring to attendance at the movies the large potential audience of serious and discriminating American citizens, who support high standards in our community life,

BE IT RESOLVED: That specifically, the Board further audience organization and guidance, and film study, through extension of its Motion Picture Councils set up throughout the country, and

BE IT RESOLVED: That this improved opinion be encouraged to endorse and support all superior films—including outstanding work in the field of historical Americana and films in the new area of stimulation of the social behavior and idealism of our youth—and that new worthwhile pictures dealing powerfully and artistically with challenging social problems be included in our endorsement.

(2) WHEREAS, an increasing number of such superior and exceptional pictures have been appearing on the screen, with growing audience appreciation,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board's membership and friends gathered at the Pennsylvania Hotel on November 16th offer congratulations to the motion picture producers for the fine films presented during the past year, and direct public attention to the high quality of this effort.

(3) WHEREAS, national unity and co-ordination in effort for National Defense are the order of the day,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Conference fully endorse the program of Inter-American Cultural Relations, and note with satisfaction consideration of cooperation by the Motion Picture Industry in forwarding this significant development, as well as with other vital phases of the whole National Defense Program.

(4) WHEREAS: the future of the screen as art and education depends upon the interest and discrimination of the young,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board seek to stimulate everywhere the organization of young students in the schools, as illustrated by the constructive work of the 4-Star Clubs of greater New York City and other communities, to study, understand and do experimental work in the motion pictures; and that such creative effort be encouraged in American institutions of higher learning.

(5) WHEREAS, the menace of undis-

criminating censorship public and private is likely to be increased in time of national stress,

BE IT RESOLVED: That the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures reassert its continued and downright support of a free screen, and an untrammelled co-operative industry, enabled to break new ground and reach new achievements.

AND BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board again criticize specifically the ineptitude and lack of discernment of politically motivated and incompetent State Boards of Motion Picture Censorship, including particularly the Board of Censors of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which, for illustration, unwisely and without adequate public explanation suppressed the important March of Time film *The Ramparts We Watch* for a period of some three months in arbitrary and bureaucratic fashion, characteristic of such State Boards.

Signed:

MARY I. BAKER, Motion Picture Council of Jacksonville

CARRIE F. KERWIN, Motion Picture Council of Detroit

EUNICE L. MCCLURE, Better Films Council of Chicago

FRANCIS D. TYSON, of Pittsburgh

Movies and Juvenile Delinquency

By JUDGE STEPHEN S. JACKSON

This talk was delivered by Judge Jackson, recently appointed Director of the Bureau for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, New York City, at the annual conference of the National Board.

MAY I say to you, as a court expression, for the record, that I do not come before you in any sense as an expert in the field of motion pictures. I am a Judge of the Domestic Relations Court, and have been for the past six years.

The Domestic Relations Court of the City of New York comprises the family court and the children's court. It has been my duty, in the past six years, to preside on approximately 20,000 hearings in the children's court

alone. That means 20,000 scenes enacted in truth on a stage, a strange stage of life, the children's court with a cast recruited from the outposts of society in a teeming metropolis.

That means 20,000 scenes freighted with drama, with pathos, and even tragedy, frequently so stark in its realism that it could never be presented on the stage or screen. If some of these scenes were portrayed in the moving picture, they would be dismissed as too fantastic, as indeed much stranger than fiction.

The important part of my experience, however, has been not the dramatic scene in the

courtroom so much as the scene and the life scenario, if you will, behind that courtroom scene.

It is prescribed in the children's court that in every serious case of delinquency a complete investigation be made portraying the complete social background of the child, delving into the cause of why the child has come into court. It was from a study of hundreds of such records that the new Bureau for Prevention of Delinquency was actually born. As a result of these numerous glances and studies into the lives of children, I formulated a report beginning about a year ago which was submitted to Mayor LaGuardia last May at his request. As a result of it a new bureau in this City was set up in the children's court and I was put in charge of it. The whole genesis and the whole modus operandi of the new bureau is to seek out the causes of delinquency and to strike at these causes, to treat it from the bottom up.

One of the first programs that I inaugurated in the new bureau was a dramatization through means of the radio of those causes. The early part of August we started a series on the New York Municipal Broadcasting Station, in which each week we dramatized one of the outstanding causes for delinquency. We showed the courtroom scene. We portrayed this difficult boy who had gotten into some serious delinquency and concerning whom the lay person might say, "Well, he is a bad boy. He ought to be punished and put away." We moved the boy out of the scene and portrayed, dramatically, that background of which I have spoken. We pointed out each week one outstanding and important feature of the background which was wrong and which contributed to the boy's difficulty.

In that series of broadcasts, the theme of which was to better understand the delinquent, we drew on the greatest reservoir in the world, perhaps, of human interest and of real, actual experience in life, the children's court in the City of New York, the largest court of its kind in the world.

We hear very frequently the lay person, experts in the field and professional people, tell us that the whole problem of delinquency, and crime or a great part of it, at least, is due to the movies and the gangster pictures. The lay people have not thought it out very

carefully, and it is a rather easy handle to hook a difficult problem to.

Reiterating my opening observation, that I do not purport to be an expert on moving pictures, it is, however, my opinion that on that count, at least, the moving pictures are not guilty, certainly to the extent to which the charge is made. I have not found in my own experience that the sweeping charges of the prevalence of delinquency is, to any considerable degree, due to the unfavorable gangster picture.

Not that we should be too complacent from that observation. I read only last night in the early edition of *The Catholic News* that the Hierarchy have issued a statement that there is a very lamentable retrogression in the fine standards that had been made in recent years under the code in the standard of pictures.

We did find, in our study of causes of delinquency, a very striking and very common situation which is important in the field of delinquency and is extremely important in its relationship to children. Almost invariably where we found a truant child, a run-away child, and, in a good many instances where children had stolen things, the money was used to go to the movies. The run-away child was found secluded in that sort of security that he has in the darkness and fantasy away from the world, as he thinks, in the moving picture theatre. I have had a case of a child who had gone to the movies at the time they opened and staged there until late at night, six days in the week.

I bring it out to show in a practical way what we all know, the tremendous pull, the tremendous attractiveness that the moving picture has for the child.

The moving picture as it is modernly presented has the greatest potential influence on the mind and conduct of a child of any secular agency in the community, without question. The very susceptibility of the child's mind, the atmosphere of the pictures, the passiveness of the child into a reception of the message, or of the theme of the movie, —he is there at ease, his guard is down, he is like wax, susceptible to the impressions being made.

That is so true that it sets up a tremendous responsibility, it seems to me. Psychologically we know it to be a fact that imagery is

impressed on the imaginative memory of the child with apparently little effect at the time, but it is stored away there and may come back at a latter time in association with a situation to very strongly and forcibly activate the child's conduct.

I had contemplated work with a large moving picture production concern on a subject that I was very deeply concerned with. I had gone into the matter rather carefully through certain channels that are not available generally to the public, and I had first thought it was highly desirable that we might make a film concerning an individual in the community beside whom the kidnaper is a gentleman. You might make a film to arouse public interest and stir up some activity in the lassitude that seems to exist in certain quarters, both among people generally and officials in some instances, concerning the individual who makes his living by peddling dope to children. That seemed to me to be a very worthy objective.

The question of marihuana and its use among school children is one that has given public officials and those interested in delinquency quite some concern. I am happy to say that recent observations, as nearly as I can ascertain them, are that the practice is not perhaps as widespread as we had feared. In any event, after further study of the advisability of such a film I decided that, desirable as those objectives were, the medium was too hazardous from the standpoint of just that factor in the mind of a child. The day might come when to a child, under the stress of circumstances, or in the emotional bravado of seeking a thrill, that picture and that imagery might flash back, "What about trying one of these marihuanas?"

That susceptibility of the child to influence by the pictures is one that gives rise to a serious challenge to all those who have any part in influencing the type of picture that is presented to children.

We must somewhat adjust our approach to constitutional rights when we get down to children. Every day you are exerting certain inhibitory regulations concerning your child. Certainly you will not permit your child to avail himself, or herself, of some of the so-called magazines and literature that are flooding the stands in many of our large

cities; you won't give your child free access to liquor; you won't even let him eat too much candy. The question of control as to the practices of children is a far different one than that of adults.

Since this is plain, ordinary, common sense, and since the motion picture does have this especial appeal to the child, it seems to me that it is extremely important that we direct ourselves even more vigorously to guiding, controlling the type of picture that will be available for the child.

We get to the question of whether the motion picture should have any responsibility in the moral sphere. We are extremely adverse to using the pictures for preachment and as a substitute for a sermon, and rightly so. But we cannot divorce, even in the entertainment field, the drama entirely from ethics and morality.

The drama purports to portray life, and life is necessarily a struggle between good and bad, right and wrong. Our drama invariably will represent the hero or the one that is championing the right as the desirable. Even the tragedies of Shakespeare, and those among the Greeks, in portraying the very revolting scenes of murder portrayed them as things to be avoided.

Literature, which is the basic art of the stage and the screen, has as its avowed purpose arousing the noble emotions. So that even in the so-called entertainment field there is not only the responsibility of keeping from the child the picture that will motivate him to bad conduct, but there is the opportunity and, yes, the responsibility of giving him the type of picture that will inspire him to proper and right conduct.

Permit me to read a brief quotation. "In addition to affording recreation, motion pictures are able to arouse noble ideals of life, to communicate valuable conceptions, to impart better knowledge of history and the beauties of the fatherland and other countries, to present truth and virtue under attractive forms, to create at least the flavor of understanding among nations, social classes and races, to champion the cause of justice, to give new life to the claims of virtue, to contribute positively to the genius of a just social order in the world."

Those words were written by one who

knew quite a bit about moral conduct and who knew a surprising lot about the motion picture industry. He wrote a little pamphlet which is formally called an Encyclical. These are the words of the late Pope Pius XI. I would recommend this Encyclical as an extremely interesting and forceful document on the subject that we are discussing.

It is my belief, however, that we cannot undertake to influence even in the entertainment field, pictures toward right conduct without some basic, fundamental guides and norms in that guidance. We cannot use some vague platitudinous concept of cultural attainment as any kind of a thorough-going norm. We cannot use some subjective scale which may change with the customs, or with the attitude of those who are carrying out this guidance.

Suicide, murder, a lie, beastiality, they can never be right no matter how many people might vote for them, no matter how many people might think they are right. And the ideals of sacrifice, of love of country, of tolerance, of respect for authority, or respect for the proper administration of law, of respect for parents, are necessarily basic and immutable and certainly cornerstones that should guide us, in my opinion, in any attempt to inspire motion pictures or their direction and production in the proper channels.

I should like to talk to you more especially, however, concerning the educational film. Here, again, we are immediately met with the objection on the part of some that the films should not be pedagogic and used for teaching purposes. That is a fallacy and a slander, somewhat, to pedagogy.

One of the basic principles of pedagogy is that teaching should be interesting. I have taught both children and adults for many years, but one of the most striking examples of the need of interest was when I used to give instructions to deaf mutes in the sign language many years ago. For every sign, of course, whatever the information that is conveyed, must be gotten by the children through their eyes. Just as soon as I would see some youngster in the back looking down and fiddling with his fingers I knew he was not getting a thing; he could not.

The necessity of keeping the interest, the

necessity of keeping the pupil's live, active attention, is a basic consideration in pedagogy and teaching, and no medium, no matter how much ingenuity or personal attractiveness or careful, interesting preparation—no medium concededly has the ability to catch and continue the interest of the child as the moving pictures have.

When this bureau of which I am in charge was set up, Mayor LaGuardia, in a radio address outlining its function, discussed the question of moving pictures as an aid to the prevention of delinquency. He specifically called upon the industry to meet the opportunity that they had in making a major contribution in this field.

Since the bureau has been set up I have been attempting to have at least four or five motion pictures produced for presentation to children in the schools. As a part of the plan of operation of this bureau we have elicited the complete cooperation, certainly on the part of those at the head, of the system of education in our program generally.

I do feel that the use of the motion picture in education has not advanced in our city—and I say this without criticism of any one concerned—to the extent that it should, or perhaps to the extent that it has in other cities. But, if I could get the pictures I am pretty confident that I could get them shown to the children.

From the experience that I spoke of in the background of hundreds of cases, I have selected some—and there are many more—specific types of delinquencies that are sufficiently common to warrant treatment.

Take the case of vandalism in the schools. In the year 1939 in the City of New York there were 126,698 panes of glass broken, mostly by children. The cost for materials and replacement because of destruction of property in the school system was \$161,941 in one year.

However, the cost factor is perhaps the least important one, because in this destruction of school property, in this turning on the instrument which is built for the child, to give him an idea and an experience in good citizenship, we see a very serious challenge to how far good citizenship, perhaps, is being taught in the schools. Of course, this represents still a small majority of the chil-

dren. Nevertheless, it occurred to me that the proper place to attack this problem is in the schools.

I have drawn up material for a scenario that would portray the experience of the early settlers hewing the wood and drawing the water and building a school, a rustic, rural school; and then to show the magnificent achievements that have been attained in our school system in the modern school. Then to portray these children who, through no sacrifice or effort of their own, have these schools available, and then, in turn, attempt as some of them have, to demolish them.

That is especially, to my mind, unfortunate at this time when all of us realize the importance of the school as a defense to the serious threat to democracy.

I have also material for such subjects as stolen cars, false alarms and the usefulness of proper recreation in the prevention of delinquency.

So far, we have been unable to have these pictures produced because it calls for expenditure of money. I would like very much to have you consider in your session in what ways that very important field might be covered.

I would like, also, in closing, to express what I said at the outset, that there is a grave responsibility in the moving picture field, not only in the prevention of delinquency but in the development of character, citizenship and the courageous moral stamina of our children, who will be our citizens of tomorrow.

Government Departmental Films

By OLIVER T. GRISWOLD

As representative of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Electrification Administration, Mr. Griswold gave this talk at the Board conference.

I HAVE been told that very few people have an overall view of what the government is doing in making motion pictures. That is not at all surprising. There is, at the moment, no central organization responsible for making them and no one person, as far as I know, who could give you the whole story, no more than any one could tell you all about the printing that is going on in the government.

I spent almost two solid hours the other day trying to get myself up on the latest in film making. I talked with nine different people. That may sound confused but it makes sense because the government organizations use films for certain purposes, just as they use the printing office.

The Department of Agriculture, for example, which, by the way, is the oldest governmental film making unit in the world, has made some 700 pictures. Last year they made some 4,000 shipments, released 14 new pictures. But these were not for theatre audiences, they were released almost entirely on 16 mm. through the Agricultural Extension

Educational program, through the State Colleges of Agriculture, and, in turn, to County Agents, vocational agricultural classes, and so forth.

Similarly, the Bureau of Mines has been, for 25 years, making 16 mm. pictures. The topics there, which total 85, are like the story of copper, the story of aluminum, and the difference in the method of making them is really one of financing. The industries, like copper, aluminum, petroleum and so on, pay for the films. They go to trade schools and technical schools.

Some of the other departments have a few films: Interior, Commerce, Bureau of Fisheries, U. S. Public Health Service and Coast Guard. But in the main they are of a technical nature designed to instruct an audience with a special limited point of view toward the subject matter.

That is an old history. It is not a whole lot of film making compared with Hollywood.

The interesting thing for you, I believe, will be the large amount of that technical film which is requested by the schools. I do not know the answer on that, but I believe it is because there is so little good film, primarily designed for school audiences—that schools, in effect, will use anything they can

get their hands on whether it is designed for them or not. I would like to know the facts on that myself.

My particular job with the government has been working in the distribution and publicizing primarily of documentary films.

I came into the picture in connection with the one called *The River*. It was the most successful government film, the most successful documentary film so far in this country, from the point of view of distribution. It was shown in 5150 theatres. This would not have happened except for the support and backing of your groups and similar organizations. We are very grateful.

I am currently working on the distribution of a picture called *Power and the Land*. That is going to be handled in about the same way as *The River*.

This film making by the government is definitely here to stay. It has a history of a little more than 25 years. This year it will see some new additions. The Signal Corps of the United States Army, which is responsible for the production of training films, is going to expand its use of films on small arms, ordnance, first aid, and so on—definitely not for the theatre, also. A great many of the pictures will be made on the West Coast in the studios.

Mr. John Hay Whitney, representing the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Republics, is either still in Hollywood or has just returned from making contacts with the films producing organizations with regard to pictures on that program.

I doubt if there will be any federal film production unit, but rather the films will be produced in connection with the program by the regular producing companies in Hollywood. The Department of Interior has \$12,000 to put Portuguese and Spanish sound tracks on some of the federal pictures dealing with natural resources. Those will be sent to South America in connection with the cultural relations program.

I think more interesting is the fact that this year there are five films designed for the theatre which are in sight. *Power and the Land*, which is completed, is being currently released by RKO-Radio Pictures. A 22-minute picture, produced by the U. S.

Maritime Commission in connection with the defense program, containing information on internal problems, domestic problems, dealing with national defense, has just been completed. It is part of the educational program of the Maritime Commission to train merchant marine sailors. It is a very interesting picture and has some lovely shots in explanation of that old sailing vessel, the *Joseph Conrad*.

There is a picture called *Power for Defense*, a single reel picture which is now being recorded and probably will be ready in a week or ten days. That deals with the Tennessee Valley electric power development and its use in the manufacture of defense products, like aluminum and other metals, that come out of the Valley.

There is a short picture called *Hydro*, about the Bonneville Dam, the Western power project, that has been made by the project itself. It is a two-reel picture, but has been designed for the theatre.

I think all of us who have anything to do with documentary films will be glad to know that Robert Flaherty, the dean of all documentary producers, who made such pictures as *Tabu*, *Elephant Boy*, and a number of other excellent films, is now making a picture for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which is to be a six-reel picture. It won't be done before January 1st, but I have great hopes for it. It will be a portrait of agricultural America, something of the history, something of the causes of the agricultural problems which are of national concern, and, I believe, some suggestions for solutions. I think you can look for something very interesting there. I do not know of a more lovable, or more competent person in the field than Bob Flaherty.

The point of view of the government film making units is certainly not one that competes with the Hollywood point of view. Films are made for educational purposes. We have seen only a few of them dealing with problems of national interest, problems of wide enough interest to warrant the very considerable expenditure that movie making requires. We have been dealing in terms of \$20,000, \$30,000 for a film, which is not

(Continued on page 17)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional and Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Fantasia

Produced by Walt Disney, music conducted by Leopold Stokowski and played by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Commentator, Deems Taylor; production supervisor, Ben Sharpsteen; story directors, Joe Grant and Dick Huemer; musical director, Edward H. Plumb; musical film editor, Stephen Csillag; recording, William E. Garity, C. O. Slyfield and J. N. A. Hawkins. Fantasound recorded by RCA and reproduced by specially designed RCA Fantasound theatre equipment developed in collaboration with the Walt Disney Studio. Photographed in Multiplane Technicolor.

Program

Toccata and Fugue in D Minor

Johann Sebastian Bach

The Nutcracker Suite.Piotr Ilich Tchaikovsky

The Sorcerer's Apprentice.Paul Dukas

Rite of Spring.Igor Stravinsky

The Pastoral Symphony. Ludwig van Beethoven

Dance of the Hours.Amilcare Ponchielli

Night on Bald Mountain.Modeste Moussorgsky

Ave Maria.Franz Schubert

IN spite of unevenness and some fairly distressing lapses of taste *Fantasia* is a delightful production. There are times when you may grow weary (not to use a stronger word) watching Leopold Stokowski on the highest podium in the world—and he appears again and again, close up and at a distance, in a nimbus of Technicolor—but when Disney's pictures come on the screen the only evidence that the Maestro is still with us is in the superb direction of the musical scores.

Perhaps it won't do any harm to stress the point that *Fantasia* is an orchestra concert, that the pieces played govern not only the visual artist but the construction of the film. Otherwise it is impossible to evaluate it as a motion picture. For instance, it has no unity, dramatic or modal; its component parts are as distinct from one another as can-

vases lined up side by side in a gallery, or, more aptly, as the numbers in a ballet concert. To such a work it is useless to apply the ordinary rules of the cinema. Each part must be judged on its own merits; the excellence of the whole film depends on the preponderance of excellent units in it. The framework of conductor, commentator and orchestra, for all its possible charm, is an obvious mechanical device to afford the only unity that a picture like *Fantasia* could have. The question has arisen: will *Fantasia* be broken up and the individual parts be shown separately? Mr. Disney says he doesn't want this to happen. The reason he gives is personal—even sentimental—and one can sympathize or differ with him only on equally personal grounds. This is all rather academic but is important in that it suggests the point of view from which *Fantasia* should be criticized. It is not a cinema, it is a series of cinemas, each drawing its inspiration, mood and action from a distinct musical work unrelated to the others in period, authorship and nationality, not to mention the intrinsic differences of mood and form. Mr. Disney's work reflects this distinctness: the setting, action and characters of any one cartoon do not occur in any of the others.

There is some talk that treating serious music in this fashion is well nigh desecration. As I suggested above the nearest thing to *Fantasia* as an art form is the ballet, the only essential difference is that one is performed by human beings and the other by cartoon characters. The rest is the same: fanciful scenery, choreographic action, rhythmic movement, fantastic plot and unreal and theatrical color. In answer to those who are

horrified at the liberties Disney has taken it can be said that they should view with equal indignation the Ballet Russe which for years has used Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and a host of other great and lesser masters to provide the musical bases of its inventions. Disney has done no more and has created as delightful a product.

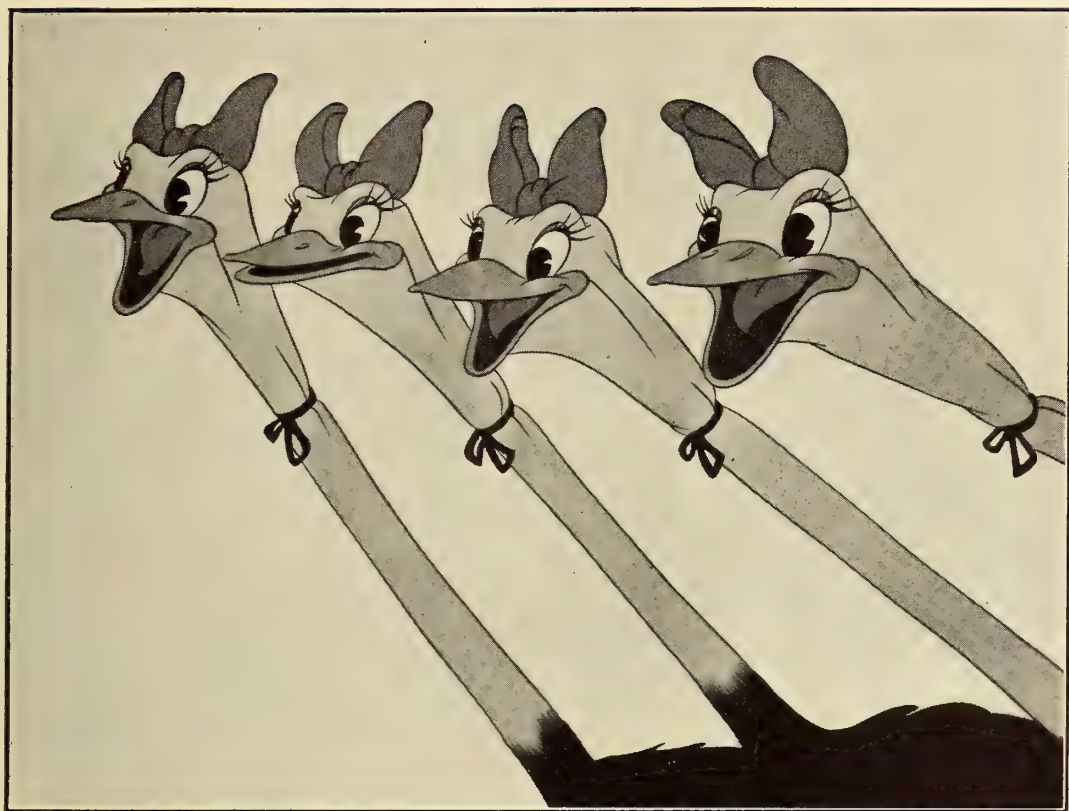
The faults in *Fantasia*, considering the music used, are remarkably few, and these are inherent in the unequal excellence of his designs and the compositions, several of which are of overpowering greatness. For one man with unvarying success to match in his concepts the works of eight accepted masters is beyond expectation. The marvel is that he succeeds as well as he does. In the Bach and Schubert pieces the film falls pretty low. The "Toccata and Fugue" is a mighty affair musically; the integrated cartoon is decidedly less than mighty. Beginning with naturalistic shots of parts of the orchestra (not forgetting Mr. Stokowski) as they are heard playing, it passes into surrealistic impressions of such things as the tops of fiddle bows darting about like fish and finally into abstract patterns and formalized natural forms skittering about the screen as one or another part of the orchestra takes up the voices of the fugue. Some of these are impressive enough at the moment you see them with their own loveliness of movement, color and form, but others, like the formalized snow crystals sweeping down a dark blue field are unfortunate in recalling the design on a package of Jack Frost sugar, or a sky-writing airplane. Altogether the Bach number is a trivial jumble of styles.

The style of the "Ave Maria" is satisfactory enough, but it suffers from the misuse of the music, the triteness and lack of clarity of the designs and the hopelessness of Hollywood in dealing with a religious theme. Its implied preachment for our time, similar in intent to the finale of *The Great Dictator*, without the apparent reason that Chaplin had, led Disney into intolerable artistic blunders. To begin with, the Schubert piece is a solo song, not a chorale, and it was set to the poem of Scott, which for reasons best known to Hollywood was forsaken for a potpourri of bible-like phrases about the "Prince of Peace" etc., that were not even

justified by clarity. The cartoon to this thingamajig depicted a procession carrying lights, presumably of nuns or monks with lighted candles, that might as well have been Chinese lanterns. This was bad enough, but the crowning blow was linking up the Schubert song with Moussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain" by a succession of chords. Not even Deems Taylor, commenting on the forces of evil as contrasted with ultimate good, could justify that. It wasn't contrast, it was a collision, and the cleverness of the sound, swinging the voices of the choir to different parts of the house, could not save it from being an artistic calamity.

Now the worst things have been said, and I can concentrate on the really pleasant parts of *Fantasia*. The charm of the pictures synchronised with the "Pastoral Symphony" quite cancels out their inadequacy for the music. You are not very conscious of the music; most of your attention is concentrated on the wonderful creatures that Disney takes from classic legend and sets gamboling to the Beethoven score. There are tiny unicorns that prance like puppies; the majestic Pegasus and his exquisite wife, happily provided with children; Bacchus on a little buck-toothed donkey as tipsy as his master; fauns a-piping (one a colored creature with a "hair-do" like Topsy's); and clouds of pink cupids working very hard to further romance. There is Zeus amusing himself with a twilight blitz-krieg on poor rain-drenched Bacchus; there is Evening bringing darkness and sleep to the world, and a lovely Diana shooting stars into the sky from the bow of a sickle moon. In its humor and beauty this cartoon justifies the use of a Beethoven score. The centaurs are the single unfortunate element. Disney has not yet mastered the problem of drawing young men.

The power of "The Rite of Spring" grows for the most part from the music. Here is evolved in terrifying sequences life from its first throbbing to the death of the dinosaurs. A great many of the pictures are rather like postal cards, but synchronized to the crash and rhythms of Stravinsky's score, they have terrifying effect. Interest becomes vivid when the monsters appear. There are beautiful compositions of the astounding creatures feeding



The ostrich ballerinas in "The Dance of the Hours."

and swimming in the marshes; there is terror in the swooping of pteridactyls from the cliffs, and fear in the monumental battle of Tyrannisaurus Rex. Finally death comes to these mighty creatures through drought and starvation; perhaps few things can be more pathetic than their hopeless march across the plains in search of food, dropping off one by one into final extinction. There are great moments in "The Rite of Spring" and deeper emotions are invoked by it than by any of the other seven compositions.

Disney has set a "Walpurgisnacht" to Moussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain"; the dead rising from their graves, witches astride broomsticks, grotesque demons flying to the monstrous figure of Satan who has summoned them to the mountain for an obscene revel. One is apt to be worn out by this time and not capable of being too im-

pressed by the Old Boy for all his malevolent handsomeness and fine bat wings. Somehow the thing just misses, although Disney has done an impressive job; perhaps its fading into the "Ave Maria" to point up the triumph of good over evil leaves one a trifle embarrassed and unsatisfied.

The most successful pieces in *Fantasia* are the "Nut Cracker Suite," "The Dance of the Hours" and "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"; in none of these did the cartoon fall appreciably below the music. Disney's charm and fantasy, his humor, wit and satire, are exquisitely balanced with the compositions. The fairies enchanting the leaves and flowers with dew, color and frost, freeing milkwood spores, stilling the brooks with ice; the three long lashed goldfish dancing in the shimmer of their transparent tails; the Chinese mushrooms; the blossoms whirling like ballerinas;

the spirited dance of the thistles and orchids—these were storybook visions of ineffable charm and grace that beautifully reflected the music that inspired them.

The "Sorcerer's Apprentice," of course, was perfect for Disney's medium; in it he had a ready-made scenario and in his immortal Mickey an ideal hero. The story as told by picture and sound is as close to perfection as Disney is likely to come. Shy, gay, adventurous Mickey enacts the legend magnificently, slyly poking fun at Stokowski's peculiar conducting as he directs from a podium-like point of vantage the labors of the enchanted broom.

An equal felicity attends "The Dance of the Hours." For this Disney reserved his most rollicking satire; the ostrich ballerinas in pink ballet shoes and Degas stances, the timid, mischievous elephants, the exquisitely dainty hippopotamus and her entourage, the Mephistophilean alligators and the shattering finale that literally brought down the house. This is unmalicious caricature at a very high pitch indeed.

As a production *Fantasia* is de luxe. With few exceptions the Technicolor is appropriate and gorgeous, the sound is the best ever (particularly its capacity to come from different parts of the screen), and Disney's invention has never been surer or more imaginative. But except for the sound there is no essential novelty in either its conception or mechanics. As far back as 1929 Disney integrated music with balletesque cartoons in *The Skeleton Dance*; since then other cartoonists have done similar things and the technicians have added color and sound. *Fantasia* is the most ambitious exploitation of all these devices. Whether this kind of thing will be made in large quantities is a moot question because of the enormous expense involved and the elaborateness of the equipment needed, but as far as the art of entertainment is concerned the cinema has made the vast advance of bringing the older arts of the dance and the marionette into the movie theatre as a main feature. It is an economic question, not an artistic one, whether it remains there or not.

(Rated Exceptional)

Arthur Beach

Power and the Land

Directed by Joris Ivens, commentary by Stephen Vincent Benet, music by Douglas Moore, photography by Floyd Crosby and Arthur Ornitz, narrated by William P. Adams, script by Edwin Locke, Musical director Fritz Mahler, produced for the Rural Electrification Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.

The Cast

The William Parkinson Family and other members of the Belmont Electric Cooperative, St. Clairsville, Ohio.

VERY soon after *Power and the Land* was finished, the news came that it was to be distributed nationally by RKO—the first documentary picture to reach so far since Lorentz's *The River*. Just how joyful this news was is difficult to convey to the casual follower of the movies. Most documentary films are seen in the luxury projection rooms of the elect, and if anyone else sees or hears of them it is—or has been—a matter of accident. About *Power and the Land*, one feels that it had to go beyond the charmed circle. Not because a major company decided to distribute, but because it is the film it is, it was destined to reach the largest audience of all, the one that loves the movies.

For this is Joris Ivens' first film that is really about America. *The Spanish Earth* and *The 400,000,000* were directed to American audiences, and passionately attempted to enlist their sympathies for interests which Ivens felt to be indented with their own, but both films dealt with the furthest extensions of these interests and what they said was a little strange to their audiences. The only strangeness in *Power and the Land* is that Ivens, a Dutchman four years in this country, has come closer to America than any native has yet managed. From the opening to the closing shot of this film, there is a familiarity to everything that happens that reaches the city-dweller as deeply as the farmer.

This is partly because it is all good functioning movie; because every shot and sequence tells the story of farm life in terms of jobs to be done and needs to be met. Maybe you never saw a cow or a cornstalk, but if you are familiar with the pattern the movies



In the Parkinson household before the coming of electricity.

at their best derive from life, you know how the Parkinson family make their living and what they get out of it all. This happens partly because of Iven's great initial sympathy with plain people, and even more through what he has learned in thirteen years of itinerant film-making. His first films were abstractions after the *avant-garde*, but even before the golden twenties were over he had become interested in life as people ordinarily live it, and had begun to film that life wherever it presented pictures to his camera's eye. Since then he had made movies in Russia, in Holland and Belgium, Spain, China, and now the U. S. Like many of our documentary people, he started out with theories of the film, but whatever these theories were, they have been humanized—brought to the human level—by so much contact with people.

This process, which is just beginning for most workers in his field, now has reached its perfection with Ivens. There is nothing

in *Power and the Land* which savors at all of the abstract. The lovely shot of horses nuzzling each other in a misty field at early morning might in another's film be arty symbolism; here it is used, as is everything, to give the quality of a first-hand experience to a pattern of life which much of America has forgotten. The Parkinson family works hard to cultivate its little acres, and you feel with them the strain and the satisfaction of that work—feel both so hard that you want badly to see them get electric power to lighten the strain and increase the satisfaction. Again because you are so much *in* the picture, you feel that they must get it through working together with their neighbors, forming a cooperative in short. That the government, the REA, should enter into the experience here is disturbing to many, of course. One irate lady wrote on the back of her ballot "Win With Willkie." Yet there is nothing in the picture to suggest that the Parkinsons get electricity through anyone's

efforts but their own. Despite a statistical sequence in the alien Lorentz manner, showing the spread of rural electrification throughout the country, you feel that the triumphal finale, power for the Parkinsons, is something the Parkinsons have brought about under their own steam.

Maybe that alien statistical sequence was necessary to carry conviction to some of the people at whom the film was directed. Maybe the various technical disputes concerning the value of the reaping sequence, the pro and cons of Douglas Moore's music, have to be decided one way or another for the sake of the future of the documentary film. But I cannot find it in me to be impressed by these things. What matters to me is the wholeness of this picture and the unity of thought and feeling which exists between the film maker and the people he puts on the screen. Many films try to teach through argument and through the trickery of movie magic, but you don't feel here that Ivens is trying to put something over. Instead, you feel that there is so much *in* the film, so much to be *learnt* from it, that you must watch again and again in order that nothing shall escape. That feeling of implicit wisdom is the newest of new departures for the documentary film, so often strident and unbelievable in the past. It comes because Ivens has not tried to persuade the people to a doctrinal will. He has instead let them speak through him with the lovely voice of his genius for the moving picture.

Richard Griffith

(*Rated Exceptional*)

Book Reviews

D. W. Griffith: American Film Master. By Iris Barry. Museum of Modern Art Film Library Series. No. 1. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Price \$1.00

THIS handsome volume, small but extraordinarily compact, appears in conjunction with the excellent historical exhibit of Griffith's work given by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Whatever may be done later in the way of a more expansive Griffith biography, Miss Barry's research and critical discrimination have here laid a ground-work for it that it

would be reckless for any good biographer to ignore.

The emphasis is naturally on Griffith's work as a film-maker, those tremendous contributions to the early growth of a fumbling medium of expression and communication that made him, as Miss Barry sums it up, "one of the greatest and most original artists of our time." Only those details of his private life that most obviously influenced his film-making career are sketched in, with such hints of his character and temperament as are also relevant to his work. His youth, his first days with the old Biograph Studio where he quickly emerged from mere actor and story-writer to being a director with revolutionary and continually expanding ideas, lead up, with a summary of his technical innovations, to the creation of *The Birth of a Nation*, which made not only film history but entertainment history, for the whole world. The peak of his career, in aim and achievement, followed with *Intolerance*. After that were more successes, but hardly anything that was not a repetition in kind of something he had done before, then gradually a mere routine of commercial movie-making, till the talkies came. His first sound-film, *Abraham Lincoln*, carried the stamp of the master, and that was ten years ago. Since then he has receded into the realm of history.

Briefly but with all its essentials, Miss Barry has outlined this history, which has been illustrated with an abundance of revealing pictures. A very interesting supplementary note by Beaumont Newhall pays tribute to G. W. Bitzer, the camera-man whose contributions to the art of the motion picture are inextricably interwoven with those of the director with whom he worked so closely for so many years.

J. S. H.

Douglas Fairbanks: The Making of a Screen Character. By Alistair Cooke. Museum of Modern Art Film Library Series No. 2. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Price \$1.00.

KEEN-SIGHTED and knowing, this essay on the steps through which a Broadway juvenile comedian evolved into one of the demi-gods of the post-war world lights up with something like brilliance an important niche in the fantastic gallery of movie history. The figure of Douglas

Fairbanks, as it flickered upon the screens of the whole globe, became one of the most potent among the almost Olympian hierarchy who held a universal sway over the mass imagination and mass affections not so long ago—the movie stars. When he went forth among the peoples of different lands (and he did a lot of traveling) he had all the glamor of royalty combined with something as supernatural as if he were a being from another world. This because he moved, and perfectly at home in it, in the aura that had been created by his screen personality: the personality world came to know as “Doug”, whatever part he played.

Mr. Cooke has traced this screen personality back to the elements in Fairbanks' own nature where it had its seeds, and subtly observed and recorded how, in times when stardom was not such a product of calculation and high-powered business methods as it is now, those seeds grew in the sunshine of success and popular adulation till they flowered into the fabulous phenomenon that was the Doug. of *Zorro*, *Robin Hood*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and *The Black Pirate*. Such a career is not possible any more—already it is a part of screen mythology.

The volume contains also a chronological outline of Fairbanks' life, and a chronological list of the films in which he appeared, with more factual material about production details than one would have thought possible in an industry where so little record of such day-by-day matters has survived.

This Film Library Series starts out as something to look forward to—handsome, interesting, informative and useful little volumes. Moreover, they are likely to become collectors' items. J.S.H.

THE editors of *The March of Time*, with the cooperation of theatre managers throughout the country have inaugurated a new service known as MOT's Topical Study Guide. Each month a Guide is to be issued based on the *March of Time* current release, and local theatre managers will have copies available when the film is shown.

Here is a timely and convenient aid for the inclusion of current history in motion picture study group programs.

Government Films

(Continued from page 10)

much in Hollywood terms. However, for educational material it begins to add up.

Unless we can get these films on the screen so that they are seen by millions of people, so that the per capita cost of distributing educational material gets down, it becomes a little difficult. In other words, you take \$50,000 for *The River*, divide it by 50,000-000 people, and you get down to what? A cost of less than a mimeographed one-page statement, which makes sense in the educational field as far as financing is concerned.

I have one of the most interesting jobs in the government. I have the opportunity to know what you feel about films and the use of films for reporting governmental activities. I talk with distributors and I talk with exhibitors. My personal feeling is that there will be more and more of these films because I understand that you believe in them, like them, and think that they are good things. Exhibitors like them.

I made a survey after *The River* had been shown and I could not find a single exhibitor who did not think it was an excellent picture. Some of them admitted that it made them money.

I have that story to tell the distributors from now on. I think the old idea that the government is out to compete with screen time and is going to run the industry ragged with competition, is pretty well exploded. *The Plow that Broke the Plains* was made in 1936. Since then there has been *The River*, *The Fight for Life, Power and the Land*, and those other very short ones which are just about to come out. I do not think that that is going to be much competition.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

graphy help to make this film pleasing to Swedish audiences. (English sub-titles). Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

- f HULLABALOO—Frank Morgan, Virginia Grey, Dan Dailey, Jr., Billie Burke. Based on an idea by Bradford Ropes and Val Burton. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. A light and amusing story of a ham actor who breaks into radio. Frank Morgan does a

very good imitation of Orson Welles' scare broadcast. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f JENNIE—Virginia Gilmore, William Henry. Based on the story by Jane Eberle. Directed by David Burton. Extreme paternal domination of a family of grown children is the problem tackled by the heroine who has wed the oldest son. The picture is slow and rather sentimental, but the setting and cast are excellent. The Prussian father is very well played by Ludwig Stossel who for all his grimness provides some of the most amusing scenes in the film. 20th Century-Fox.
- f *LET GEORGE DO IT—George Formby—Original screen story by Angus MacPhail, John Dighton, Basil Dearden and Austin Melford. Directed by Marcel Varnel. Hilarious comedy about espionage in Bergen, Norway. By mistake a dumb banjo player is shipped off to Bergen to act as a British spy in the band of the chief German operator. How he finds out the spot he's in, how he gets the key to the enemy code, how he is discovered and escapes, supply some of the funniest slapstick you're likely to see. It's frankly propaganda but with a delightful difference. (British production). Film Alliance.
- m LETTER, THE—Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall. Based on the play by W. Somerset Maugham. Directed by William Wyler. The neurotic wife of a planter in the British Indies through jealousy murders her lover and claims he attacked her. Her husband and friends go to bat for her only to discover at last her duplicity. It's a handsome production with plenty of suspense and excellent acting, especially by James Stephenson and Miss Davis. Warner Bros.
- f LITTLE NELLIE KELLY—Judy Garland, George Murphy. Based on the musical comedy by George M. Cohan. Directed by Norman Taurog. A delightful musical with excellent cast, tunes, direction and settings. Only in a few spots does it slow up and then only to let Miss Garland do her specialties, which won't bother those who like what Judy has to offer. It's sentimental, but then it's Irish. Mr. Murphy dances and all told it's an enjoyable show. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj MAGIC IN MUSIC—Allan Jones, Susanna Foster, Margaret Lindsay. Based on an idea by Ann Ronell. Original screen story by Andrew L. Stone and Robert Lively. Directed by Andrew L. Stone. A story of a musical camp where youthful musicians are trained. Into this camp comes an ex-burlesque singer who makes good because of her marvelous voice. Susanna Foster may become a second Deanna Durbin. Paramount.
- f MARK OF ZORRO, THE—Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Basil Rathbone. Based on "The Curse of Capistrano" by Johnston McCulley. Directed by Rouben Mamoulian.
- Tyrone Power is no Douglas Fairbanks, but then he doesn't try to be. He and Miss Darnell make a very pretty pair on the few occasions when they get together. There is a really thrilling duel ending with Basil Rathbone on the more unpleasant end of a sword. But all in all, one way or another, you'll be amused. The camera work is tops. 20th Century-Fox.
- f MELODY RANCH—Gene Autry, Jimmie Durante, Ann Miller. Original screen story by Jack Moffitt and F. Hugh Herbert. Directed by Joseph Santley. Gene, a radio cowboy, in the big city, is chosen honorary sheriff for a celebration in his hometown of Torpedo. He goes only to find three bullies in complete control of the place. He decides to stay and run for sheriff and after much gunplay cleans out the rascals. Durante is his old self and very funny. There's music, too, and more romance than usual. Republic.
- f MURDER OVER NEW YORK—Sidney Toler, Marjorie Weaver. Original screen story by Lester Ziffren. Directed by Harry Lachman. Charlie Chan versus plane saboteurs, with usual interference run by his son and dumbness furnished by local police, all ironed out with a cost of only three murders by the patient and sententious wisdom of Mr. Chan. It's pleasantly exciting and improbabilities are apt to stand out only after the picture is over. 20th Century-Fox.
- f ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS—Allan Jones, Nancy Kelly, Robert Cummings, Peggy Moran. Based on "Love Insurance" by Earl Derr Biggers. Directed by A. Edward Sutherland. A romantic musical. A young insurance salesman who will insure anybody, loses out when he takes out a love insurance policy for his best friend. He gets the girl and his friend returns to an ex-sweetheart. Comedy is supplied by the radio team. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello. Universal.
- f SANDY GETS HER MAN—Baby Sandy, Stuart Erwin, Una Merkel, Edgar Kennedy. Original screen story by Jane Storm and Sy Bartlett. Directed by Otis Garrett and Paul Smith. An amusing comedy of a fireman and a policeman who are rivals for the hand of a young widow and how her small child Sandy solves her mother's problem as to which she will marry. Universal.
- m SEVEN SINNERS—Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne. Original screen story by Ladislav Fodor and Laslo Vадnal. Directed by Tay Garnett. A romance of the tropics. Bijou, a cafe singer falls in love with a naval lieutenant, but gives him up for his career. Universal.
- f SO YOU WON'T TALK—Joe E. Brown. Original screen story by Richard Flournoy. Directed by Edward Sedgwick. A comedy, sometimes even a funny comedy, about an absent-minded author-to-be and his spitting image, a newly released gangster. Of

course it all hinges on these characters being mistaken for each other with the expected complications and the equally expected happy conclusion. If you are a Joe E. Brown enthusiast you can get two helpings of him here. Columbia.

f **TIN PAN ALLEY**—Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Jack Oakie, John Payne. Based on a story by Pamela Harris. Directed by Walter Lang. A pleasant story, with many favorite songs of the period, about two budding music publishers and two girls in a vaudeville sister act, back in 1915. Their careers meet with good and bad fortune and with love complications, till the end of the war brings a happy ending. Snappy lines, swift pace, handsome sets and swell songs make this a very enjoyable musical. 20th Century-Fox.

f **WEST OF PINTO BASIN**—Ray Corrigan, John King, Max Terhune. Original screen story by Elmer Clifton. Directed by S. Roy Luby. The hardy trio run into a villainous gang who have tied up the finances of one of those towns by holding up all stages bringing money in or out of the place. The citizenry are starved out of their land and justice is pretty generally corrupted. The Range Busters clear all this up between songs, ventriloquism and playful romance. Monogram.

f **YOU'LL FIND OUT**—Kay Kyser, Peter Lorre, Helen Parrish, Kay Kyser's Orchestra. Original screen story by David Butler and James V. Kern. Directed by David Butler. A typical Kay Kyser musical full of nonsense, and added to this spooks and spirits. Amusing in spots, but pretty long. RKO Radio.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- f **DOGS YOU'LL SELDOM SEE** (Sports Parade)—A handsome color short exhibiting rare breeds in the canine family. Vitaphone.
- f ***EYES OF THE NAVY** (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—Superb film of the training of men for the Naval Air force, made with the help of the Navy and showing fine shots of air maneuvers. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **FLAG OF HUMANITY**—An historical short based on the work, disappointments and final success of the founder of the Red Cross in America. Vitaphone.
- f **FLOATING ELEPHANTS** (Cinescopes)—Showing the use of a balloon barrage in British defense. Good shots of airplane fighting. Columbia.
- f **FLY FISHING** (Sports Parade)—Dick Miller shows the art of perfect fly casting. Vitaphone.
- fj **FOOTBALL THRILLS OF 1939** (Pete Smith Specialty)—High spots in the big games of 1939, with good use of the stop camera to show the various plays. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 3**—The famous radio program with the three experts and their guest of honor, Miss Alice Marble. RKO Radio.
- f **LURE OF THE TROUT** (Ed Thorgersen Sports)—Ed Thorgersen with the help of excellent color photography and expert fly casters demonstrates the art of catching a trout for the fun of it all. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **MARCH OF TIME NO. 4, THE** (7th Series)—"Arms and the Man—U.S.A."—An up-to-the-

minute survey of the progress of Uncle Sam's first peace-time draft, emphasizing the ready response of American youth to the call to duty and the plans being made for the co-operation of industry as a further arm of defense. RKO Radio.

- f **MIRACLE OF SOUND**—A visit to the sound studio of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **OLD DOMINION STATE**—(Magic Carpet Series)—A pleasant trip in Technicolor through the more picturesque parts of Virginia. 20th Century-Fox.
- f ***OLD NEW MEXICO** (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk) Travelogue in Technicolor through the more picturesque parts of the state. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 2**—Making a sun dial; kitchen gadgets; making phonograph records. Paramount.
- fj ***QUICKER 'N A WINK** (Pete Smith Specialty)—A demonstration of the fastest camera in the world, showing the slowest of slow motion. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **SNOW FUN** (Pathe Sportscope)—An exciting account of water sports at Lake Placid, including skiing, skating, jumping and bobsledding. RKO Radio.
- fj **SPORTSMAN'S PARTNER** (Pathe Sportscope)—Another interesting study of bird dogs and how they are trained to be of great help in locating the hiding places of quail and partridges and in retrieving the game after it has been shot. RKO Radio.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 84**—Expert sling shot; how they dispose of old street cars; miniature tug boat; a prisoner who becomes an artist; Gus, a trained bird. Universal.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 85**—Expert wood carver; an ex-bank used as a home; a strange clock; the only woman river boat captain; a prisoner who builds an organ. Universal.
- f **STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 86**—A Japanese typewriter; a new way to lower lifeboats; what happens to a tree when it is planted upside down; a miniature city; a unique train; a paralyzed boy who draws pictures with his teeth. Universal.
- f **UTOPIA OF DEATH** (Passing Parade Series)—A trip to the island of Tiburon off the coast of Mexico whose inhabitants came there to find Utopia and are now engaged in race suicide. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f **JOE REICHMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA** (Melody Masters)—A concert of swing music. Vitaphone.
- f **KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED** (Serial) Nos. 11-12. The adventures of Sergeant King and the Canadian Mounties draw to a close with the foiling of enemy plans, and the destroying of the submarine on which the spies were making their escape. (See former Guides for credit and synopsis).
- r **RODEO DOUGH** (MGM Miniatures)—Seeing movie stars with humor at a Hollywood rodeo. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Cartoons and Comedies

- f **GALLOPIN' GALS** (Color Cartoon)—Lady horses being catty and well dressed at a Derby. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **GOOFY'S GLIDER** (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Goofy's attempts to master the technique of gliding provide laughs aplenty and earn for himself a promising notch in Disney's cartoon hall of fame. RKO Radio.
- fj **HOMELESS FLEA, THE**—Color cartoon. What happens to a flea that makes his home on a dog. Clever and amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **MR. MOUSE TAKES A TRIP** (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Mickey Mouse and Pluto have their troubles aboard a train. RKO Radio.
- fj **SNEAK, SNOOP AND SNITCH** (Animated Antics Cartoon)—The king's treasure chest is stolen but there proves to be nothing in it. Paramount.
- f **TANGLED TELEVISION** (Color Rhapsody)—A color cartoon exploiting the wonders of television amusingly. Columbia.
- fj **WALDO'S LAST STAND**—Our Gang puts on a floor show to sell lemonade. One of the better Our Gang comedies. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

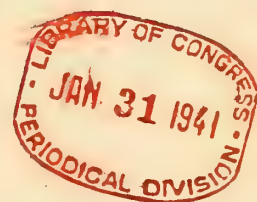
Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone,
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



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January, 1941



Henry Fonda and Jane Darwell in "Grapes of Wrath," special mention performances in best film of the year (See page 14)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

f BEHIND THE NEWS—Lloyd Nolan. Original screen story by Dore Schary and Allen Rivkin. Directed by Joseph Santley. The crack reporter of a large paper has gone cynical and spends his time drinking and being frivolous, when the even tenor of his ways is disturbed by the arrival of a cub full of ideals and hero worship of what he thinks the older man is. The faith of the cub finally converts his blasé senior and between them both they clean up a nasty politically racket. A good yarn, well acted. Republic.

f BILLY THE KID'S GUN JUSTICE—Bob Steele. Original screen story by Tom Gibson. Directed by Peter Stewart. Billy and his two companions save some home-stealers from being swindled out of the land they had bought from a crooked dealer who had secured the property by murdering the original owners. It's a good western of the approved pattern and is well cast. Producers.

f CHAD HANNA—Henry Fonda, Dorothy Lamour, Linda Darnell. Based on the novel by Walter D. Edmonds, and serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post* under title "Red Wheels Rolling." Directed by Henry King. "Red Wheels Rolling" well describes this bright and entertaining romantic drama of circus life. The acting is excellent, especially that of Henry Fonda who plays the role of a farm boy who runs away to join the circus. The Technicolor is outstanding and most appropriate to the gaudy trappings of bygone circus days. 20th Century-Fox.

f *COMRADE X—Clark Gable, Hedy Lamarr. Based on an original story by Walter

Reisch. Directed by King Vidor. A rough-and-tumble comedy about an American correspondent in Moscow who smuggles news out under the title of "Comrade X." Under threat of her father to expose him he is maneuvered into taking out of the country a pretty communist girl, who does not care to be rescued. The complications that follow, together with dialogue and background are fast comedy. All 'round this is an excellent production and propaganda that is funny and out-spoken. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. See also Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 18.

f ELLERY QUEEN, MASTER DETECTIVE—Ralph Ballamy, Margaret Lindsay. Based on the detective stories by Manfred B. Lee and Frederick Dannay. Directed by Kurt Neumann. A good mystery introducing the smooth sleuthing of Ellery Queen. The owner of a health school is found with his throat cut and no weapon present. The amateur detective goes to work and solves the business, and incidentally gets himself a pretty secretary. It's a logical and amusing film. Columbia.

m ESCAPE TO GLORY—Pat O'Brien, Constance Bennett. Original screen story by P. J. Wolfson. Directed by John Brahm. A group of oddly assorted passengers fleeing war-threatened England are on a British boat at sea when war is declared. They are attacked by a submarine which damages their engine but they escape temporarily in the fog. The film is full of fine character acting and tense and exciting episodes. Columbia.

f FLIGHT COMMAND—Robert Taylor, Ruth Hussey. Based on the story by Commander Harvey Haislip and John Sutherland. Directed by Frank Borzage. The story of a newly graduated flier who has been ordered into a crack squadron of the Navy and how he made good. There is a slight romantic interest injected, but the picture deals for the most part with the men and machines that constitute our naval fighting force. The flight photography is splendid and thrilling, which we owe to the U. S. Navy which provided the show. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f GO WEST—The Three Marx Brothers. Original screen story by Irving Brecher. Directed by Edward Buzzell. The Marx Brothers and the Old West meet with hilarious results. They go to find their fortunes and spend the time in their own peculiar way aiding two young people to recover a deed to land wanted by the railroad from the local villain who had stolen it. Excellent slapstick with good tunes and a fine production. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f HER FIRST ROMANCE—Edith Fellows. Based on the story by Gene Stratton Porter. (Continued on page 18)

JAN 25 1941

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This Coming Year

WHATEVER we are in politics, world events are making our motion picture producers isolationists to the extent that the business they have to attend to is pretty much here at home. Our own audiences, being about all they can conveniently reach, are all they have to please. With some adjustments to counter-balance the shrinking or vanishing of old-world income, they appear to be going ahead with schedules as ambitious as ever, which will be necessary to keep the theatres supplied with attractive entertainment if the generally expected boom in earnings among their countrymen makes more, or more frequent, moviegoers. Unless the trade prophets are whistling hopefully for their own morale, we'll have plenty of movies this year, and movies made chiefly for our own pleasure, without too many bows, either complimentary or conciliatory, to foreign consumers.

There's the consent-decree to put into working order, and the results of it in production and distribution still to be seen. What it will mean to the public is all in the future, with perhaps some disillusionment among people who think their own private complaints can be settled by legislation. Other troubles are sure to spring up: the picture industry has always been the whipping boy for all sorts of dissatisfactions, and though it isn't a boy any longer it's still one

of our most convenient scapegoats. The congenital grandma never realizes when a little boy has grown up. And the movies are always at hand for anyone with an axe to grind or to bury in something.

Already there are flutterings, likely to fan themselves into something more violent as the danger of our being at war increases, about propaganda. Along with other means by which men express themselves the movies may have to struggle for their freedom. But we find it hard to believe that the excesses of the last war will be repeated.

Each year is naturally a promise of the year to come, and the pictures we had in 1940 are an assuring promise for 1941. Intelligence and respect for intelligence exist plentifully in Hollywood, and any howler who denies it just doesn't get around much among the movie theatres. Look at either box-office or critics' polls for the last year, compare the product of the American studios with the product of any other industry that depends on mass consumption to keep going, and no reasonable person has any ground for complaint. Whether *The Grapes of Wrath* or *Rebecca* is the best, they are both good, and they are not the only good ones. Or perhaps a library or a museum is the place to find what some people are after? If it is, that's the place for them to go to, not a motion picture theatre.

Composing for the Movies

By VIRGIL THOMSON

Mr. Thomson who gave this talk at the National Board annual Conference, was the composer of the music for "The River and "The Plow That Broke the Plains," and is music critic of the New York Herald Tribune.

IF you will pardon me for being technical, I think I shall be very technical. Taking for granted that the movies are the most popular art form in the modern world, that they are a present and potential power of every kind of the most enormous nature, and getting right on to the matter of writing music for the movies and what the movies do about music and what music does by and for the movies, there is one thing that I want to get out of the way first. I personally have a passionate lack of interest in the disseminations of musical classics through the movies, the gramophone, or any agency whatsoever. I am not opposed to such dissemination. I am not for such dissemination. It is a matter that leaves me completely indifferent. Those things do get disseminated and it is nice if you are on the receiving end of that dissemination. If you are living in a small town, or isolated community, it is nice to have access to the cultural tradition in every form. But the function of contemporary music in the movies is a thing that interests me a great deal more than that. I am a contemporary composer and I have an interest involved.

I also think that movies have an interest involved. For no matter how beautiful the classics are, any contemporary work which is decently or correctly executed is infinitely more powerful and more immediate. Ancient work is beautiful but not powerful. Modern work is always questionable as to beauty. It has sharp qualities and unexpectedness. But when it works it works so incredibly well that there cannot be any possibility of commercial or even of high class esthetic organizations making the choice of contemporary rather than ancient work provided they can get good contemporary work.

Now, the problem of getting good con-

temporary music for the movies is a fairly incidental problem. When human beings work in large numbers at any kind of thing in the world over a certain length of time, they automatically get to be good at it. The problem of quality always takes care of itself if you have a certain number of intelligent people working at the problem and a certain number of intelligent people consuming the product. The consumer-producer interchange of criticism, and pure technical criticism and experiment from the inside, take care of that. It has taken care of the movies so far. The esthetic quality and human power of the movie of today, the visual movie, compared with that of 20 years and 30 years ago, simply shows you what happens when they keep at it long enough. As a matter of fact, it has happened quite rapidly. The same thing is happening in music. Of course the actual integration of music and films dates only from the commercial exploitation of the sound film. That is about 10 or 12 years at most. But already it works pretty well.

Now, there are certain kinds of movies. And here is where I am going to get technical about it. There are certain kinds of movies, only about three or four kinds, and you have to have a different kind of music for each.

The documentary film has never presented any seriously difficult problem about musical composition. All over the world producers of documentary films have addressed themselves to what you might call high class art composers who, in many cases, had no previous experience in working for the movies at all. That kind of art workman is always extremely difficult to handle in a medium that is semi-commercial. But they have all made extremely good scores without any trouble whatsoever. The documentary film needs only to be accompanied by continuous, vaguely appropriate symphonic music. If it has a commentary, the commentary can go above the music and the music does not interfere with it and it does not interfere with the music. A certain amount of adjustment on

the dials, as little as possible, I assure you, is all that is necessary.

The comic movie is not very much more difficult. All you need there is a lot of gaity and a certain number of comic musical effects timed to hit right on the nose certain comic effects on the screen. The Walt Disney kind of thing, the Silly Symphonies, or the animated cartoons, Mickey Mouse, in general give beautiful musical results on account of the hand-made quality and technique. They do not require rehearsing between real actors and the music, and everything can be made absolutely to conform with everything else.

The esthetic of the animated cartoon is not a new thing. So far as I can figure it out, it is identical with that of the Marionette theatre. Because it presents no new problems of an esthetic nature at all, the producers of animated cartoons can produce masterpiece after masterpiece. They hit the nail on the head, I should say, probably 97 times out of 100, with a perfectly good and real wow that pleases intellectuals and dumbbells and common people. Everybody loves Mickey Mouse, everybody loves the Silly Symphonies. They are beautifully executed visually and are in conformity with the auditive effects in an extremely interesting way, rather better than, in many cases, the Russian Ballet, because they are dealing with Marionettes that can be handled right on the dot.

The resemblance to the Marionette theatre is even carried to the point of the use of falsified vocal intonations, strained voice placement in general. Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse speak in the same kind of voices that Marionette actors use. It is an old, old convention that these little dolls need a certain kind of distorted, slightly inhuman speech. There is no difference. "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," in *Fantasia*, might just as well have been done by Tony Sarg. It is a revival of a classic art under new conditions of transmission and dissemination, but I see no esthetic problem involved there whatsoever. There is musically involved the technical problem that applies to all films, that the film producers have not until quite recently spent the same amount of time, money, care and thought on getting a good result in audi-

tive photography that they have on getting a good result in visual photography. I do not know the final esthetic value of the whole film called *Fantasia*. It has some charming things in it that some will like and others won't. And I do not know whether it will be a commercial success. That, too, leaves me rather uninterested. An enormous achievement has been made, due to Mr. Leopold Stokowski having, for one reason and another, begged, bullied and forced the spending of something like \$500,000 on the sound track. The reproduction of music in it is superb. Perhaps the film will lose money, but after all in any venture of that type people often lose money anyway. No symphony or opera house ever lives without private or public sub-vention. I am not impressed when people lose money on a good thing. It is natural and admirable that they should.

Mr. Walt Disney and Mr. Stokowski have made something that the movie industry and the public will not forget. The public will not forget it because once you have heard a good thing you will remember it. The movie industry will not be able to laugh it off because the public now has heard it. Consequently, I consider the film from the point of view of musical technique, or recording technique, a revolutionary one and very important.

Let me get on now to the real headache in the matter of movie music, and that is: What on earth can they do about music in the naturalistic fiction film? When you have visual images as in a documentary you can have a musical accompaniment and it is just like pantomime or ballet. It is very easy to arrange. You can even accompany that, as I say, by a commentator. The commentator forms a third element that is not really integrated with the whole thing. He does not disturb you any more than somebody walking alongside you and talking to you while you are looking at the pictures in an art gallery disturbs you. The comedies present no great trouble either, because they are comic and consequently easily stylized. The animated cartoon is so completely stylized that it fits, note by note, with the completely stylized thing that is music. But, naturally, the fiction film with real live actors and real scenery

and naturalistic dialogue has a hard time finding just how it can get on with music and how it can get on without music.

Music went underneath the silent film very well and could be pinned on to the silent film today just as it is pinned on to documentary films. But the introduction of naturalistic speech makes a great difference. That trouble exists in the theatre, too. Either music must be very incidental, or else it must completely absorb the show; and then you have the opera. If it absorbs the show that way you have to integrate the dialogue with the music, prosodize it, intone it to correct speech values; and then, of course, you have a verbal art form again of a highly stylized nature such as is appropriate to music, which is so highly stylized itself.

But the fiction film cannot be so stylized as all that. To begin with, the film is a photograph, and the mere formula of photography and its projection gives you already a visual stylization that is quite large. Everything is reduced to black and white, or else everything is reduced to extremely false color; and the eye is not unaware of that. The mind only likes a certain amount of stylization, only the amount that it can see reality through; and the amount of stylization involved in the mere technique of photography makes it inevitable, in the long run, that the fiction film should be in its acting and in its scenery absolutely as naturalistic as possible. Naturally, with naturalistic acting, naturalistic scenery, clothing and story you could not have high poetic or stylized dialogue. You have to have simple naturalistic dialogue.

Then they want to use music. They think they cannot get on without music. You have to do something at the beginning and end of the film when people are changing their seats. You have to have something under the titles and credits. Movie cutting, even at its best, is a pretty delicate and dangerous art, because the movie by its nature is made up of very short elements, you see, and it takes some pretty skilfull putting together to get any kind of a visual continuity out of that essential jerkiness of the movie. They often need music to smooth over the jerkiness when they get into a bad spot. Then, of course, it is impossible to refuse the tempta-

tion to put on a "number" here and there. When the story goes to a night club, you have to have night club music.

Music does not go very well with spoken speech. It never has historically, and never will to our dying day and its dying day. Music under naturalistic conversation always turns out to be what is known technically in music as melodrama, which simply means music and speech. Our use of the word "melodrama" to mean a kind of hammy theatre comes from the hammy nature of what musical melodrama usually is. That is to say, mama is dying, and the landlord is coming along somewhere with a mortgage, and there are a couple of guys down in the musicians' pit playing "Hearts and Flowers."

That is what inevitably happens when you start putting commentary music under naturalistic speech. If you are dependent on realistic pretext, such as cradle songs, wedding marches, political parades, operatic débuts and such like, you limit enormously the subject matter of your movies.

My opinion about the straight fiction film is that you have to cut the music out altogether, except at the beginning where it is like an overture, and at the end where it is like a postlude that gets the congregation out of the house. And, as a matter of fact, in the last few years—and *Grapes of Wrath* was one—a number of films have been done with practically no music and have been quite successful. I think they have to do the same as the theatre did. For centuries the spoken theatre thought it could not get along without an orchestra. Then it was found that it could. The movies can, too.

The only other possibility is to integrate the whole business on the Mickey Mouse system, which is just like all the other entertainment forms, the marionettes and the opera, where music is integrated with spectacle and with speech. If you do it that way, your actors, of course, will have to act in a more stylized fashion. They will have to be moved around in a more statuesque way, and the text will have to be poetic, rhymed or something of the kind as it is in the Mickey Mouses.

Then you would no longer have the naturalistic fiction film about ordinary middle class life, which is the stock in trade of the

movies dealing with a public of that social category and general range of interest which naturally wants to see things about itself on the screen realistically. You have the headache that has been a headache in the movies ever since the talkies became obligatory. Either they have to get rid of music, or else they have to do something about it as a technical job, a very difficult technical job of reflection about esthetic principles, possibilities and trying them all out.

I said to begin with that I was not especially worried about quality in the movies. Quality takes care of itself. The writing of music for the movies, or directing or doing anything else in the movies is very like giving concerts or playing tennis. It is not by

thinking yourself inspired, or by advertising your product afterwards, that you achieve quality; you do it by taking care of your technique and form and keeping our eye on the ball. Quality automatically follows if the esthetic and technical procedures are correct.

The esthetic procedure about the use of music in the naturalistic fiction film is, at present, not correct. And the films are going to have, as they have been having in the past ten years, increasing difficulties, even of a financial nature, due to the fact that the esthetic problem involved in the combination of music with naturalistic dialogue has not yet been solved correctly and that the public feels the lack of a correct solution.

Children and the Movies

By MRS. RALPH T. EDWARDS

As Motion Picture Editor of "Parents' Magazine" Mrs. Edwards knows about parents, about children and about movies, of which she talked at the recent annual Conference of the National Board.

WHEN I accepted the invitation to speak to you, I did so with the selfish purpose of getting information rather than giving it. As you know, there are plenty of sources of information about the movies, not to mention the no uncertain way the movies have of speaking for themselves. But it is equally important for the Parents' Movie Guide to know about parents and their varying attitudes toward the films. So we are always eager and grateful for access to groups such as yours, who are not only studying the motion pictures, but as community leaders know what parents feel about them. I hope you will be able to give me some good pointers.

However, my plan was changed a little because of a letter I received from Dr. Frederic Thrasher, whom I am sure you all know. So I am going to postpone my questions and perhaps I can talk to some of you after the meeting is over.

It seems that Dr. Thrasher had received one of those bits of promotion that magazines prepare for advertisers to tell them how good the publication is. I can imagine his interest, to say nothing about his raised eyebrows, when he read about some of these families who "depend upon the Parents' Magazine Movie Guide to select wholesome and enjoyable films for parents and children to see together." So, in his capacity as Editor of The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Motion Picture Council, Dr. Thrasher, very rightly, asked us the following questions:

First, who selects these pictures? Second, how are they rated and why are they regarded as good for children and parents to see together? Third, what types of pictures are not included, and why?

Now, I am exceedingly grateful to Dr. Thrasher for considering this of interest for the Bulletin. His letter not only gave me an excellent outline for a short talk, but it provided the encouragement to talk to you about what we are trying to do in the motion picture field rather than on the general subject of children and the movies.

I shall discuss here the last question

first. What types of pictures are not included, and why? So far as possible we include all feature films of the entertainment variety. We do this because we want to provide parents with a source of reference for any film which comes to town. So we include the good, bad and indifferent. We add an appraisal as to their interest for adults and as to their interest, and sometimes suitability, for young people and children. This seemed to us sufficiently inclusive, but I received a letter the other day which made me wonder if perhaps we needed cross references.

A motion picture chairman of the Parent-Teacher Council from a Midwest city, I think it was, wrote saying that she had been asked by the Santa Claus Club, which was planning to give a free movie to the children at Christmas time, to give her opinion on a film called *Hop Along Cassidy*. She said she could not find it in the Movie Guide. Of course, poor Hopalong's name was spelled as two words which showed that the arbiter of what the children were to see as their Christmas treat had not made the acquaintance of one of childhood's most beloved heroes. So we sent her a list of some of Hopalong's recent films and we hope she will approve them and not insist on something more edifying than a Western.

We have a great deal of respect for the child's ability to choose his own films. We did not arrive at this by ourselves. All of you who are parents know that the tendency in education today is to have the child face and solve his own problems.

We are very gratified to hear from our readers that the family movie guide lives up to its name. That is, it is not kept on a top shelf, parents do not consult it in secret and then hand down an edict as to what picture the children are to see. Instead, they are encouraged to consult it along with their parents and have some say in the decision. This decision has to be made on the basis of an impersonal guide.

I think you will all agree that we cannot depend on the advertising or the promotion about a film. I do think this has improved tremendously in the last two or three years. But the advertising is still far behind the pictures themselves. It still does not tell us

what your group and many other groups are educated to want to know about a film, such as the photography, the music, the direction, the background, the characterization. So we try to provide as much of this information as we can.

As a matter of fact, we like to feel that we play a role similar to that of a children's librarian. In the children's room at the library they are encouraged to browse and choose their own books, but the librarian is always there to be consulted, especially if there is doubt as to the subject matter of the book, or its interest for the particular child.

I do not want to give the impression that we have all satisfied customers. I had a letter from a 10-year-old boy last winter beginning with "I just wanted to write and say that you are no good. Whenever a picture comes to town that is good for 10-year-old boys, it says 'C—no.' I know it won't do any good but I just wanted you to know that you are not liked." Later I received a letter from the boy's father who proved to be a minister, asking if I would mind sending a copy of the boy's letter, that they had not known he had written to me. I really felt very happy about it. I felt what a lot of spleen that boy had got out of his system by writing to me. We feel our shoulders are very broad and we can take a lot of such responsibility. Because, after all, the important thing is to minimize the element of controversy between parents and children.

One way to make this selection of pictures a family business with the children having some say is to have the children pay for their movies out of their allowance. Of course that is not original as a suggestion, but we do find that it does work, because when they have to pay for their own pictures they are going to look them over very carefully before they decide to spend the money on a particular film.

Some parents write us that the trial and error method works best. That is, if the child is feeling abused because he isn't seeing some highly publicized adult films now and then let him have a chance at them. You will usually find they will admit they enjoyed them less than pictures that were more in their normal age range. Since the children cannot possibly see all the pictures that come

to town it does not take a great deal of tact to convince them of the good sense of saving both time and movie money for films that they enjoy most.

I realize, of course, that there are precocious children who will actually prefer *Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* to less adult films. One little girl told me she liked those films because they did not seem so "made up."

I, myself, think that that is a rather wholesome and encouraging attitude. Dr. Tyson, chairman of the session, spoke of the desire that we have for the movies to grow up, and if children begin demanding films that show things as they really are I think eventually somebody will have to do something about it.

Even so, I do think that Alice Miller Mitchell has expressed the fundamental rule about movies for children when she said something like this, "As life and its experiences unfold gradually to children, so should movie life which is real to them unfold gradually."

Of course we all know that life does not always unfold gradually to children. Those of Europe and China, to say nothing of underprivileged children in our own country, can testify to that. At the same time, we, as parents, feel that while we do not want to over-protect our children we would like to keep their experience of the world a little bit in line with their developing mentality.

Now, although we hope for a cultural by-product of our work, as I have been saying it is mainly informational. It is organizations such as yours who do the groundwork, who do the educational and the cultural work. It is our province to report your successes and sometimes your failures. Because parents, as parents, have to deal with things as they are, with the movies as they are, as community leaders they can work for the ideal.

Before we go on to the next question, I always, whenever I have anything to say or write, like to call on parents as my final authority, because we are very sensitive on the subject of presuming to tell parents what they should do.

I have here a report of a discussion of movies and the growing child, which was held by a group of parents in Lakewood, Ohio. They devoted two evenings to the sub-

ject with the idea of threshing out the matter and arriving at some definite conclusions. They arrived at eight and I shall give you two of them. I believe one bears me out in letting the children help decide the family movie bill of fare.

It says: "Parents must accept the responsibility of knowing what kind of a movie their children are seeing, and of helping each child to select intelligently." Then; "The Parent-Teacher Association should provide" (and that does not necessarily mean the Parent-Teacher Association but the Motion Picture Council or any other civic-minded group) "should provide, through its regular channels, the best information available about current movies." The teacher who wrote the report adds; "Anyone who has used this procedure with children soon discovers that interested children give a wealth of intelligent suggestions."

Now for Dr. Thrasher's next question, "Who selects these pictures?" Theoretically, the Movie Guide is merely an avenue for the widest circulation of the appraisals of films done by a number of organized reviewing groups, most of them out in Hollywood.

We make a folder for each film. In this folder we keep all of these reviews, all the trade paper and newspaper reviews. So we have a well rounded picture of what different types of critics have thought of the film. And although we write our own descriptions, the appraisals are a composite of what the groups say. If they always agreed, ours would be merely a tabulating job. As you know, they very frequently disagree. So you have to know the particular slant of each of these groups. You do get to know it. In fact, I discovered some of my own prejudices.

For instance, there are some of the groups that will be particularly squeamish about blood and thunder, others about sophistication, some about ideas which are contrary to accepted beliefs, some will condemn a film for children solely on its length because they consider it too tiring. That is a valid reason and we usually include that information. We tell parents to use their own judgment about it. Then others, and although I have not discussed your standards with your Reviewing Committees, I believe you are among them, take the stand that the child's comprehension

and genuine interest are the paramount consideration.

My own personal phobia is against films in which a brash young man, or even brasher young couple offend against all the rules for amicable relations between human beings, have not a vestige of civilized manners, and we are supposed to consider them attractive.

I am going to talk a little bit about some of the disagreements. Take first, blood and thunder. I think there is more disagreement on this subject among the groups than on any other. The same film will be highly recommended by one group of mothers as having an interesting historical background and as being what the children should like and should have, and then another group will come along and will say it is much too exciting and that children should not be allowed to see it.

In that connection, I am often reminded of Orson Welles' ingenious explanation of why the country was scared over his Martian broadcast. He said that through a mistaken notion and educational theory that horror was bad for children, the present generation of grown-ups had been deprived of their blood and gore, so they were not prepared to take it in their stride. He said it used to be that goblins and ghosts played a natural part in the life of a child and by the time he was grown the supernatural had no terror for him. Of course we do not have to believe a word of this remarkable alibi. I do not think that any generation has been deprived of its Grimm. There is no more or better source of horror than those fairy tales. I do think that in his flippant way Mr. Welles has probably called attention to something that might happen if parents, in their zeal to protect children from excitement should give them a completely de-shivered existence. I think it might work out that the very shocking things which are apt to happen in adult life might be too much for them.

That is the stand we take in trying not to advocate a milk and water movie diet for children, although, of course, if there is disagreement about a film we usually mark it "exciting" and leave it up to the parents.

We feel that it is important to have these appraisals in the hands of the parents when the films actually come to their theatre. Be-

cause of having to go to press six weeks in advance, we often have to see the films ourselves. I sometimes think I have come to be a composite organized reviewer because with only three or four exceptions, the appraisals I have made myself correspond with the ones that later came in.

Now, for the final question, as to which films are regarded as good for parents and children to see together.

We will say that that last phrase is meant to assure parents that they won't be bored and does not imply that children should not go with others of their own age. The matter of going to the movies with their age mates is half the fun for children. But, whether or not they always attend together, we feel that parents should share their interest in films. It is only through the community of interest that they can, through their choice of films, influence their children's taste for better films. Parents read their children's books, either aloud or pick up one to discover what is going on in the child's mind, what his interest is at the moment; they are more or less forced to share radio programs.

I recently had the privilege of attending one of the National Board Young Reviewers' showings. Aside from being very much impressed with their comments on the films, I liked the stimulation, the fact that so much really good talk came out of their seeing of the film and then being allowed to talk about it afterwards.

On all sides we hear pleas for families to revive free discussion. It is true, families these days have so many different interests and so many places to go that that sort of thing has gradually been disappearing. Therefore, we do everything we can to stimulate it. Certainly, the movies do afford a fruitful source for this type of family discussion. Moreover they give you a wonderful chance for getting the slant of your child's mind on a great many things.

Then, as I said, children think we are terribly dull if we do not know what they are talking about. I grew up in the era when there was great controversy over which was the cuter—and that was the deciding factor, cuteness—Mary Pickford or Marguerite Clark. We had one aunt who came frequently to the house. She loved to stir up an

argument by insisting that Marguerite Clark had a more lady-like quality. Well, we immediately went to bat for Mary, because she was decidedly our favorite.

Although I think that youngsters these days have a much more discriminating basis for their partisanship, even so I can remember loving the discussion and feeling that our parents thought the things we were interested in were worth discussing.

Then, of course, there is the responsibility that parents have of patronizing good films if they expect the local exhibitors to show them. I feel that that is your more particular job and you are doing a very good one. In addition, there is the important aspect of going to the movies with your children in order to find out for yourself what their reactions are.

I have a friend who is a writer, and a very busy woman. She has a 10-year-old son. She does not get out with him very much during the day because she is busy at her typewriter. So she sends him to the movies, or the park or wherever he is going, with the maid. She happened to see *Drums Along the Mohawk*, and she thought it was such a good film that she wanted the pleasure of seeing the picture with him. So she took him and one of his playmates. When she was talking with me she was livid with rage against the movies. She said, "I thought before we got out of there that that boy would tear his cap to shreds and have all of the buttons off his coat. If I ever have time away from my novel I am going to talk against the movies and the things that they provide for our children to see." I was too polite to tell her that after all she had seen that film herself and if she did not know enough about her child's capacity for excitement to judge his probable reaction to the film, then I was afraid she did not have very much of a case against the movies.

We believe that many group discussions will follow Mrs. Edward's interesting comments, and we include in this issue as further basis for discussion viewpoints expressed by Mr. Thomas Braham, Motion Picture Editor of the Chattanooga Times, in what he has called "a talk not delivered before a Parents' group."

The Cinema and the Child

By THOMAS BRAHAM

MADAME President, Parents and Teachers—The invitation from the program committee to appear before you to discuss the suitability of moving pictures as entertainment for children gives me much pleasure and gratification. Quite possibly I should have jumped at the chance and inflicted upon you my views orally had I not learned painfully by making my one and only public address at chapel at the University of Chattanooga that it is far, far better for me to do my speech-making from the safe vantage point of this column. That was nearly a year ago, but the stage fright is still upon me.

It is rare for a bachelor to advise parents on the rearing of children, and it is rare indeed for a poorly educated layman to be invited to lecture teachers on any subject whatsoever. Such an opportunity to impart advice and counsel I could not pass up; for, as Joseph Conrad remarked of one of his characters: "Like most intensely ignorant people, he burned with a passion to instruct."

My acquaintance with children, it is regretted, has been slight; but this fact, I believe, need not invalidate my observation. Consciousness of not knowing all about a child may be helpful in understanding him; parents, devoted parents, often believe that they know their children so thoroughly that they fail to note their reactions or heed their comments.

The best advice on the suitability of movies for children is furnished, I think, by the children themselves. What they see in a picture is quite different from what we see; it is possible that they get much more out of a movie than we do, and the value to them is greater than to us. We do not know how good a picture is; they do not know how bad it is. Frequently a child will be more thrilled by a third consecutive showing of a film than we at first blush. I recall the bright days when no movie was ever dull, or no book tedious. That was a quarter-century ago, when movies were vastly inferior to those of today. Those remembered with

greatest pleasure were, perhaps, more likely the worst than the best. The more wicked the heroine the more fond I was of her. I had a special weakness for scarlet women—whether they were royal wantons or dance hall queens. Theda Bara, Florence Reed and Dorothy Dalton were numbered among my prime favorites. I strongly preferred these sirens to the sweetness and purity of Mary Miles Minter or Mary Pickford, though my appreciation of the latter was enhanced by my mother's injunction against seeing her pictures. The reason: Immorality. My parent had not seen the picture—movies in those days were the special province of children and the hoi polloi—but she had heard about "Tess of the Storm Country." An illegitimate baby had figured in the story of this offending film. I did not know the difference between a natural and a proper baby. It seemed to me that babies were babies, just as pigs is pigs, and—for that matter—it still does.

Considerable concern is felt for the effect of underworld pictures on the children who flock to them eagerly. If, however, the Nick Carter stories, avidly and furtively devoured by many of our parents, did not produce a generation of cutthroats and train-robbers, it is likely that the gangster films of today will not seriously impair the character of your children. The influence of such films on their speech and manners, assuredly, does not improve. But in the usual movie, the average child is likely to hear much better English spoken than he does at home.

Now, in conclusion—as we public speakers are wont to say—I wish to leave one thought with you. With all facetiousness aside, I want to speak a word for the child who is terror-stricken, who is thrown into a panic by some of our more violent melodramas, and even by such juvenile classics as "Pinocchio" and "Snow White." (The latter was banned from England as being too frightening to children who now bravely face death from the air.)

It seems to me that such pictures are the occasion, rather than the cause, of their distress. You may have noticed that children who are affected so violently are usually under some strain, are usually fearful and apprehensive. The child's private worries

and uneasiness cause the mock menace on the screen to seem insupportable. The tears of fright he sheds are as vicariously activated as those of his mother's that well from inhibited personal sorrow, rather than from concern for the persons in the play. Declaring a holiday on scoldings, threats and punishments is likely to be far more beneficial and reassuring to a child than denying him the pleasure—and the occasional pains—that the movies afford.

The Children Speak

THE opinion has been expressed here that the best advice on movies for children is from the children themselves, so we quote some of their comments brought out in the discussion of several pictures seen recently by the Board's Young Reviewers, age 8-14. The youth viewpoint is valued and thus we let them have the last word in this consideration of children and the motion picture.

In talking about *Arizona* they said: "Historically I think the picture was very good except it was too drawn out." "It is one of their regular westerns but it is on the top. It hasn't dry love scenes." "It mixed history with fiction, and it was amusing to see Jean Arthur carrying a gun." "I think those men and women who had minor parts helped the picture better than the stars did." "It was different, the man does not hold her in his arms and say "Oh darling." It was not dry—he kissed her and jumped on his horse and rode away." "I would like to say something about the directing. There were several scenes of mobs, and Wesley Ruggle did a very fine job of directing them."

Little Nellie Kelly made one girl of 12 say "America is a land of opportunity." and two others "I was impressed with the way the immigrants felt when they saw the Statue of Liberty, and when they were earnest about their citizenship." and "I think one thing worth remembering is that America is a land of opportunity even without jobs for everyone." While one boy came in with "I think America is the only land of opportunity, even without having a lot of money." Talking

about recommending the picture they said "I would tell my friends to see it definitely because it is the kind of picture my friends would like." "It is all right for everyone because the story is simple enough for children, and also adults would enjoy it. "There are some parts little children couldn't understand, but the music and the plot make up for it." The comment "The name Norman Taurog was familiar" shows again attention to directors, something older people are apt to ignore.

The Great Dictator was seriously considered as shown by such comment as, "No man is good if he thinks other people are lower than himself. No man is good when he persecuted others." "That men are human not machines, that totalitarianism is something that is not real and that it is a democracy that is real" "I thought it was a very interesting, sometimes humorous story. It taught you very much. I think this is one of the greatest pictures ever produced." "I criticize the picture in the sense that there was too much contrast between funny scenes and sad one and serious ones." One 12 year old girl said "The comedy was relaxingly enjoyable." One boy said "What impressed me most about the picture was 'Chaplin.'" More words about Chaplin and his work were "It is much more interesting because Charlie Chaplin talks. I was anxious to see it to hear him talk." "It is different from his other pictures because the other pictures were peaceful but this is about war." "I liked the picture because it is more or less down to earth and it shows the suffering of the people in Europe, and it shows Charlie Chaplin's true character." "I saw a Charlie Chaplin picture down our way and he was funny, but this is more than funny." The much discussed ending of the picture received attention from the young people in the following way "I think the end was best." "I enjoyed the whole picture because if you only had the end or only had the picture without the ending, it would not be so good." "I liked it because in the end Charlie Chaplin expressed what we all think, that there ought to be no dictators and only freedom and happiness."—and others agreed.

The Trail of the Vigilantes comments give us some opinions on Westerns—"I never knew a horse could descend and ascend such

steep inclines." "Some horses are equal to riding down steep inclines and others are not." "The recklessness of the old west." "I learned that there are modern hotels in the west." "Never fall in love with the rancher's daughter." "The picture was good as a western picture but not good as any other picture." But warnings on how to judge this western were given in the two statements—"It was a combined western and farce." "It ridicules the Western type picture." In talking about its audience rating they said "Interesting, not so gruesome, therefore good for children. Acting done very well. Between B and A." "I don't think it should be recommended." "My father would enjoy it." One 12 year old boy emphatically expressed himself. "It is only for young children who like Andy Devine and Mischa Auer." And one 11 year old girl "I think it is one of the few western pictures that the girls don't have to fall asleep over."

Now if you have any opinions in agreement or disagreement with the above, or any other opinions on this important topic from your own experiences you would like to send us for publication, we are certain these two authors and our readers would like to hear them, and we will welcome them.

Conference of Councils

At the last meeting of the Metropolitan Motion Picture Council the increased interest in forming new Councils in nearby communities showed itself in detailed questions from the guests, and detailed discussion about how such organizations are formed, and how they operate, with particular emphasis on the work of the Schools Committee in New York City, which has become a highly efficient group in the complicated business of listing theatres whose programs can be recommended for boys and girls of school age.

For a more thorough discussion of all the elements that enter into the forming and running of such groups, the National Board is arranging a Conference for February 17th. Experienced leaders in established organizations will be present to contribute what they have learned, with suggestions to meet the special problems of particular localities.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Lists of 1940

JUST about Christmas time the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays takes off its gloves and gets out its pencils and makes its choice of the best pictures of the year. For 1940, with *The Grapes of Wrath* judged the best of all, their choice was:

1. *The Grapes of Wrath*
2. *The Great Dictator*
3. *Of Mice and Men*
4. *Our Town*
5. *Fantasia*
6. *The Long Voyage Home*
7. *Foreign Correspondent*
8. *The Biscuit Eater*
9. *Gone with the Wind*
10. *Rebecca*

THE GRAPES OF WRATH, adapted by Nunnally Johnson from John Steinbeck's novel, directed by John Ford, photographed by Gregg Toland, produced by Twentieth Century-Fox. A remarkable example of taking an important novel and putting its essence into a screen drama of cumulative action and emotion. It has social significance as a picture of an important American problem—that of the economically disposed refugees of the dust-bowl areas. It has cinematic significance as a vivid demonstration of how the screen can concentrate and then spread out in its own dimension the material of a long and rambling novel, literally translating it into another medium. It is a superb example of the fusing of all the elements that go into the making of a motion picture—the writing of it, the physical planning of it, the directing, the acting, the put-

ting together, the final total of production. Everyone concerned with it did a superlative job.

THE GREAT DICTATOR, produced, written and directed by Charles Chaplin, photographed by Karl Stuss and Roland Thieroh, distributed by United Artists. Remarkable in any year as the product of one man's genius, his own utterance in screen form of his personal attitude toward something of tremendous importance. In choosing a subject that in the last years has rocked the world with tragedy and working on it with the tools of satire and slap-stick, Chaplin ran the greatest risk of his life—he might have failed to make his point in his most serious endeavor. His success is all his own: his conception is embodied in the most brilliant performance he has ever given. In some hoped-for future his picture of Hitler may be more revealing than anything in the history books.

OF MICE AND MEN—adapted by Eugene Solow from John Steinbeck's novel, directed by Lewis Milestone, photographed by Norbert Bodine, with music by Aaron Copland, produced by Hal Roach, distributed by United Artists. Distinguished by the tenderness and sympathy with which writer and director and actors have revealed the inner lives of unusually pitiable people. What it lacks in universality, being concerned with folks whom a combination of personality and circumstances put outside the normal stream of life, it more than makes up for in depth and power, and in all its technical phases it is a fine example of motion picture making.

OUR TOWN—from a play by Thornton Wilder, directed by Sam Wood, photo-

graphed by Bert Glennon, with music by Aaron Copland, produced by Sol Lesser, distributed by United Artists. Taking the simplest material from the quiet life of a small town, this is a tender evocation from America's past, homely and poignant, done in an effectively novel style, with a memorable cast of actors.

FANTASIA—conceived and made by Walt Disney and his artists, with the musical help of Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. A further exploration by Walt Disney in his art of animated painting for the screen, done in the form of pictorial interpretations of a program of classical music. The music is given superlative reproduction, a revolution in screen sound, and the pictures come closer and closer to showing what the brush of the pictorial artist may do for the screen.

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME—adapted by Dudley Nichols from short plays by Eugene O'Neill, directed by John Ford, photographed by Gregg Toland, musical score by Richard Hageman, produced by Argosy Corporation, presented by Walter Wanger, distributed by United Artists. A drama of men at sea, homeless wanderers in ships, whose lives John Ford and a fine cast have made vivid and close.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT—written by Charles Bennett and Joan Harrison, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, photographed by Rudolph Maté, produced by Walter Wanger, distributed by United Artists. Melodrama of the present war, done by Alfred Hitchcock in his best style, with splendid management of action, suspense and colorful characterizations.

THE BISCUIT EATER—adapted by Stuart Anthony and Lillie Hayward from a story by James Street, directed by Stuart Heisler, photographed by Leo Tover, produced and distributed by Paramount. Unusual and unpretentious, this story of two boys and a dog, made in its home Georgia setting, is warmly close to boyhood life and nature.

GONE WITH THE WIND—adapted by Sidney Howard from Margaret Mitchell's novel, directed by Victor Fleming, photographed by Ernest Haller, produced by David O. Selznick, distributed by Metro-

Goldwyn-Mayer. A vivid and handsome transcription to the screen of a phenomenally popular novel, retaining all of the novel's popular appeal and distinguished by Vivien Leigh's remarkable depiction of Scarlett O'Hara.

REBECCA—adapted by Robert E. Sherwood and Joan Harrison from Daphne Du Maurier's novel, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, photographed by George Barnes, produced by David O. Selznick, distributed by United Artists. Another fine and faithful screen dramatization of a popular novel, whose romantic appeal has been given its full pictorial value.

The best foreign film was considered *The Baker's Wife*.

THE BAKER'S WIFE ("La Femme du Boulanger"), based in a novel by Jean Giono, directed by Marcel Pagnol, photographed by G. Benoit, R. Ledru and N. Daries, music by Vincent Scoeto, English titles by John Erskine. Distributed in the U. S. by "The Baker's Wife, Inc." An exceedingly domestic crisis in the life of a village baker is the core of a warm, vivid picture of French provincial people, illumined by sympathy and insight, lightened by characteristic humor and produced with affectionate skill and superb acting. A fine example of French film-making at its best.

Among documentary films, Pare Lorentz' *The Fight for Life*, made for the government to better the conditions of child-birth among the poor, was considered the best of the year, with Honorable Mention given to the beautiful film made also for the government by Joris Ivens to depict the work of the Rural Electrification Administration, *Power and the Land*.

Among the Exceptional Committee's "Ten Best," the acting was a vital part of the excellence of the films, particularly that of Chaplin in *The Great Dictator*, so interwoven with the other elements that it was often inseparable from the whole. But many screen performances were considered memorable in themselves, and the following were chosen for special mention:

Jane Bryan in *We Are Not Alone*
Jane Darwell in *Grapes of Wrath*
Betty Field in *Of Mice and Men*

Henry Fonda in *Grapes of Wrath* and *Return of Frank James*

Joan Fontaine in *Rebecca*

Greer Garson in *Pride and Prejudice*

William Holden in *Our Town*

Vivien Leigh in *Gone with the Wind* and *Waterloo Bridge*

Thos. Mitchell in *The Long Voyage Home*

Raimu in *The Baker's Wife*

Ralph Richardson in *The Fugitive*

Flora Robson in *We Are Not Alone*

Ginger Rogers in *The Primrose Path*

George Sanders in *Rebecca*

Martha Scott in *Our Town*

James Stewart in *The Shop Around the Corner*

Conrad Veidt in *Escape*

Since the motion picture is so inextricably a combination of art and entertainment—being an art that must, in the widest sense of the word, be also entertaining, in order to survive, a picture's popular appeal is tremendously important, and the National Board is as interested in that as in a picture's artistic qualities. Time appears to be bringing the two things closer and closer together if there is any significance in the surveys which the Board each year tries to make more extensive. On the basis of popular appeal the Board's Reviewing Committees, numbering nearly three hundred men and women, have this year chosen the following:

1. Rebecca
2. Gone with the Wind
3. The Grapes of Wrath
4. Fantasia
5. Pride and Prejudice
6. Foreign Correspondent
7. The Great Dictator
8. All This and Heaven Too
9. Abe Lincoln in Illinois
10. The Long Voyage Home

This year, for the first time, the Board has canvassed hundreds of people throughout the country to discover their favorites among the year's films, through Motion Picture Councils, Better Film Councils, Cinema Clubs, Women's Clubs, teachers' groups, college classes and museum groups, in Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina,

Tennessee, Texas, Vermont and Wisconsin, with the following results:

1. Rebecca
2. All This and Heaven Too
3. The Grapes of Wrath
4. Pride and Prejudice
5. Gone with the Wind
6. Knute Rockne—All American
7. Abe Lincoln in Illinois
8. The Howards of Virginia
9. Foreign Correspondent
10. Young Tom Edison

As significant as any other list is that made by the Board's Young Reviewers and their associated 4-Star Clubs—boys and girls ranging in age from 8 to 18. Their selections were made in advance of any published lists made by older groups or critics so that there can be no question of their being influenced by older people's opinion. The voting resulted in the following, listed in order of preference.

1. Knute Rockne—All American
2. Foreign Correspondent
3. All This and Heaven Too
4. Boom Town
5. Rebecca
6. The Great Dictator
7. The Sea Hawk
8. Gone with the Wind
9. Strike up the Band
10. The Howards of Virginia

The surprising thing about this list, to those who aren't in close touch with the likes of boys and girls, is that it might have been made by people of any age. It is another year's proof of what the National Board has been learning for a long time, that the tastes of children in movies is not essentially different than that of their elders. Their standards of excellence are just as high—and the only thing they seem to prefer is plenty of action. The children of today are not only the audiences of tomorrow—they are a genuine part of the audiences of today, and not a special section of it that demands something different from what appeals to the general mass of movie-goers.

The following break-down of the vote into the choices of boys and girls of different age groups may have a special interest for those who would like to compare tastes.

BOYS (8-13 years)

Knute Rockne—All American
 The Sea Hawk
 The Great Dictator
 Boom Town
 Foreign Correspondent
 Edison the Man
 Gone With the Wind
 Strike Up the Band
 Northwest Passage
 Brigham Young, Frontiersman

GIRLS (8-13 years)

Strike Up the Band
 All This and Heaven Too
 Foreign Correspondent
 Rebecca
 The Great Dictator
 Boom Town
 The Biscuit Eater
 Knute Rockne—All American
 The Howards of Virginia
 Edison the Man

BOYS (14-18 years)

Knute Rockne—All American
 The Sea Hawk
 Boom Town
 All This and Heaven Too
 Foreign Correspondent
 Gone With the Wind
 The Great Dictator
 Rebecca
 The Howards of Virginia
 Strike Up the Band

GIRLS (14-18 years)

Rebecca
 All This and Heaven Too
 Foreign Correspondent
 Knute Rockne—All American
 The Howards of Virginia
 Boom Town
 Gone With the Wind
 Pride and Prejudice
 The Great Dictator
 North West Mounted Police

Critical Comment

Two Ladies from Philadelphia

THE City of Brotherly Love and its class ramifications figure as the basis for a couple of social studies that have recently come to the screen—*The Philadelphia Story* and *Kitty Foyle*. How Philadelphia may feel about them is a side issue, because their principal interest for the rest of the country will be in the ladies who are their heroines, Katharine Hepburn and Ginger Rogers. That interest is pretty sure to repay Hollywood for the pains it has gone to to investigate the peculiarly local fetiches about which the plots of these bits of romantic comedy revolve.

The Philadelphia Story has all the silky slickness that MGM can achieve so superlatively when it wants to, and the directing hand of George Cukor, as sure and gentle and needle-clawed as a pussycat's paw. Underneath its smartness and *richesse* is a fable as simple as a Sunday-school story, about a girl who found out that true hearts are more

than coronets. To put it another way, she was a snob and a cold-blooded one, who got wise to herself and the people around her. The fundamentals of this are of course not exclusively Philadelphia, which supplies, let us say, the scenery. It might be merely amusing, if that, were it not for Miss Hepburn. Her qualities as an actress have been debated vigorously and venomously, and it must be admitted that she has supplied all the arguments herself, in roles of such varied fitness to her gifts and personality that it would have been a miracle if she had been perfect in them all. But here, at any rate, is the right thing for her, or something she has made herself right for, and inside and outside and all the way through she is warm and alive and a human reason for the whole business. The rest of the people are good, too, all the way up to excellent, but they wouldn't be nearly so much without the centrifugal force with which the character she has created holds them together.

Kitty Foyle has to do with that unexplained thing no doubt familiar to natives of the Keystone metropolis called the "Main

Line," evidently a section of Philadelphia or its society into which a stenographer may not aspire to marry. A gentleman from—or is it of?—that "Main Line" bedazzled Kitty almost to the limit, in spite of a more attractive and even more sensible young doctor, unencumbered by any snobbish rich relatives, who was anxious to marry her. The glamor that had attracted Kitty to such functions as the Assembly in the days of her pigtailed kept persisting, and though she never got to the ball she almost went to South America with her Prince even if he had to leave a wife behind to take her. Just why in the end she didn't is not explained, except in seeming something that Ginger Rogers just wouldn't do. For Miss Rogers manages to keep Kitty natural and credible and clear-sighted through several pretty murky situations (as well as a prehistoric continuity), and to emerge as very much Christopher Morley's heroine with very little of the Morley material to work with. Most of the salty stuff that Morley put into his novel has been tossed away—some of it necessarily—and what is left is the story of a Cinderella who gave up her Prince for a better man: a story little blessed with invention or grace of telling but exceedingly blessed in having Ginger Rogers to make it plausible and likeable.

Ex-Comrade

NOW that no holds are barred some of the funnier aspects of Stalin's homeland are available to the screen, and *Comrade X* goes at them a good deal as Mack Sennett used to go after some of his more solemn contemporaries. *Ninotchka*, coming in times when we treated foreign ideologies more gently, was more subtle, and for lots of people that much more effective. *Comrade X* is far more robust, and the laughter it stirs comes from lower beneath the diaphragm. It pokes fun at some pretty gruesome matters, as gruesome as anything in *The Great Dictator*, but for those who laugh at it many things that were terrifying when they were merely whispered about will never seem so threatening again. The New York stage is making murder funny this season: the comparison can't be pushed too far,

but maybe something new is proving itself, that repugnant ideas and customs can be dealt with just as effectively by making them ridiculous as by dressing them up as horror stories. A ridiculous thing is really no more embraceable than a horrible one. *Comrade X* was obviously not conceived as a social document, but it has its sharp as well as comic aspects. And it may be the beginning of a new career for the fabulous Hedy Lamarr—that of a dead-pan comedienne.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

Directed by Edward Dmytryk. The most intelligent but socially the least attractive girl in the school is transformed, under the kind attentions of a visiting concert singer, into a charming and alluring young lady. And this all happens in spite of an unsympathetic half-sister who makes a play for the singer herself. It's a tuneful piece, lack of originality compensated for by good singing. Monogram.

- f HUDSON'S BAY—Paul Muni. Original screen story by Lamar Trotti. Based on incidents from the Life of Pierre Esprit Radisson. Directed by Irving Pichel. A romanticized history of the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company under the leadership of a French trapper who had been adopted by the Indians. Muni is very infectious as Radisson and is supported by a splendid cast and a costly, ambitious production. The scenery and sets are beautiful. 20th Century-Fox.
- f KEEPING COMPANY—Frank Morgan, Ann Rutherford, John Shelton. Original screen story by Herman J. Mankiewicz. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. Two youngsters get married and decide never to have any quarrels. Jealousy and misunderstanding cut through their resolutions despite the good advice of the parents, and they separate. When all is blackest they suddenly see the light and a happy ending is provided. Morgan is very good in the part of the girl's father and Virginia Weidler as the brat holds up her role well. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- m *KITTY FOYLE—Ginger Rogers. Based on the novel by Christopher Morley. Directed by Sam Wood. A realistic presentation of the troubles of a poor girl and a rich young man in love. Miss Rogers' acting is excellent as is the whole production. RKO Radio. See also Exceptional Photoplays Dept., p. 17.
- f LADY WITH THE RED HAIR, THE—Miriam Hopkins, Claude Rains. Based on the memoirs of Mrs. Leslie Carter. Directed by Kurt Bernhardt. A romanticized biography of Mrs. Leslie Carter from her

scandalous divorce, and her aspirations to be an actress, to her triumphant association with David Belasco. Against a de luxe background of sets and costumes Miss Hopkins makes a creditable delineation of the great actress's character in its hysteria, poise and assurance. The rest of the cast is no less adequate. Warner Bros.

f LITTLE MEN—Jimmy Lydon, Kay Francis, Jack Oakie. Based on the novel by Louisa M. Alcott. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. A good hearted owner of a medicine show sends his foster son to a farm school run by a Swiss and his wife. The boy is rather intractable at first but is treated so wisely by Miss Francis that he comes through a very good lad indeed. The plot is sentimental and somewhat improbable, but Jimmy Lydon, Jack Oakie and "Elsie" the cow make it a warm and entertaining movie. RKO Radio.

f LONE STAR RAIDERS—The Three Mesquiteers. Original screen story by Joseph M. March and Barry Shipman. Directed by George Sherman. The wrong-righting trio save the ranch for the old lady who owns it by training at short notice, and selling to the U. S. Cavalry, a herd of wild mustangs they rounded up to increase the ranch's depleted stock. The usual skull-duggery is about, but there are sequences filled with beautiful horses. Republic.

f LONE WOLF KEEPS A DATE, THE—Warren William. From the work by Louis Joseph Vance. Directed by Sidney Salkow. The Lone Wolf on a stamp hunting trip to Havana stumbles into a pretty girl whose fiancé is in jail on a murder and kidnapping charge of which he is innocent. He offers to help the young pair, and after a good deal of racing around he brings the villains to justice in spite of obstacles furnished by the local police. An exciting melodrama with Eric Blore providing the comedy. Columbia.

f LOVE THY NEIGHBOR—Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Mary Martin, "Rochester." Original screen story by Edmond Beloris. Directed by Mark Sandrich. Light and amusing comedy with the well known radio comedians Benny and Allen, hating and trying to outsmart each other. Paramount.

f MICHAEL SHAYNE, PRIVATE DETECTIVE—Lloyd Nolan, Majorie Weaver. Based on a novel by Brett Halliday. Directed by Eugene Forde. A highly amusing murder mystery with Lloyd Nolan as a private detective who gets the best of the police at every turn. One of the best things Nolan has done and with a good supporting cast. 20th Century-Fox.

f NO, NO, NANETTE—Anna Neagle, Richard Carlson, Roland Young. Based on the musical comedy by Frank Mandel, Otto Harbach, Vincent Youmans and Emil Nyitray. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. A

gay comedy with music about a girl who spends her time and almost her romance pulling her soft-hearted uncle out of girlie scrapes. The plot is light (some may even call it silly), but the film is one of the most graceful and cheering of its kinds. All the actors deserve praise for putting over this charming and witty bit of fluff. RKO Radio.

f PHANTOM SUBMARINE, THE—Anita Louise, Bruce Bennett. Original screen story by Augustus Muir. Directed by Charles Barton. A young lady reporter is employed by the Navy to discover the possible connection between an expedition to dive for sunken gold and a submarine reported to be lurking in the vicinity of the Panama Canal. She stows away on the treasure-hunting ship and after a few brushes with villains discovers that the approaches to the Canal have been mined. The Navy appears at the right moment and all is saved, including her romance with the leader of the treasure hunt. Columbia.

m *PHILADELPHIA STORY, THE—Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant. Based on the play by Philip Barry. Directed by George Cukor. A witty, beautifully produced comedy of class distinction. The heroine is a rich young lady about to be married for the second time. Her fiancé is a mine worker who has come to the top. Merriment begins when her first husband, her philandering father and a pair of reporters show up for the wedding. The cast, which includes James Stewart and Roland Young, does a top flight job all round. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. See also Exceptional Photoplays Dept., p. 17.

m PLAY GIRL—Kay Francis, James Ellison. Original screen story by Jerry Cady. Directed by Frank Woodruff. A story of a sophisticated playgirl who uses her wits with the aid of a young girl to get money from gullible men. Only when the girl falls in love is their partnership dissolved. RKO Radio.

f PRIDE OF THE BOWERY, THE—Leo Gorcey, Bobby Jordan. Original screen story by George Plympton. Directed by Joseph H. Lewis. The young hero who wants to be a prize fighter is fooled by his friends into joining a CCC Camp. There his inflated ego and primitive manners offer difficulties, but by dint of wise guidance and his own essential virtue he wins a place of respect in the youthful community. The film presents a fine picture of life in the CCC and the story, though routine, is entertaining and appealing. Monogram.

f SAINT IN PALM SPRINGS, THE—George Saunders, Wendy Barrie. Based on the character by Leslie Charteris. Directed by Jack Hively. Another of the "Saint" series. This time the "Saint" comes to America to aid the police in the capture of a gang of international crooks. RKO Radio.

- f *SANTA FE TRAIL—Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Raymond Massey. Original screen story by Robert Buckner. Directed by Michael Curtiz. An intensely interesting story of the events leading up to the Civil War. Seven West Point graduates are sent out to "bloody" Kansas Territory, as their first assignment, to capture John Brown the Kansas abolitionist and his followers. The building of the railroad over the Santa Fe Trail, and the romance between the hero and heroine round out an excellent story. Warner Bros.
- f SECOND CHORUS—Fred Astaire, Paulette Goddard. Original screen story by Frank Cavett. Directed by H. C. Potter. Light and amusing comedy, with not half as much dancing in it as there should be with the Fred Astaire-Paulette Goddard team. Artie Shaw and his orchestra have a big part in the picture and most of the comedy is supplied by the wealthy and rather befuddled music backer played by Charles Butterworth. Paramount.
- f SHE COULDN'T SAY NO—Roger Pryor, Eve Arden. Based on the play by Benjamin M. Kaye. Directed by William Clemens. An amusing comedy revolving around a breach of promise suit. Warner Bros.
- f SON OF MONTE CRISTO, THE—Louis Hayward, Joan Bennett, George Sanders. Based on the novel by Alexander Dumas. Directed by Rowland V. Lee. It happens in the Balkans in 1865. The Grand Duchess of Lichtenburg is practically the prisoner of her general, who has romantic as well as political ambitions. Young Monte Cristo, who has fallen under her charm, comes to her rescue, and masquerading as the "Torch," after much sword-play and ingenuity, brings freedom to the lady and justice and liberty to her state. Not exactly a new theme and rather improbable, but full of dash and color and good acting. United Artists.
- f SOUTH OF SUEZ—George Brent, Brenda Marshall. Based on a story by Sheridan Gibney. Directed by Lewis Seiler. Accused of murdering and robbing his partner in the African diamond country, George Brent flees to England. Under an assumed name he falls in love with the dead man's daughter. Later he is caught, tried and exonerated of the crime. Warner Bros.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- f AMERICAN SPOKEN HERE (Passing Parade)—A clever explanation of some items of American slang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f BEAUTIFUL BALI (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—A lovely color travelogue through Bali showing its scenery and inhabitants. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f DREAMS (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade)—The presentation of three dreams from accredited records with simple, psychoanalytical comment. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f *GOING PLACES No. 84—"The Melting Pot of the Caribbees." The people and their homes in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Universal.

- f *GOING PLACES No. 85—"Hunting on Top of the World." An interesting and well photographed trip with Norse seal hunters into the Arctic. Universal.
- f *GOING PLACES No. 86—"South of the Border." A beautiful film of old and modern Mexico. Universal.
- f HISTORIC VIRGINIA—A trip to famous places in Virginia. Instructive and beautiful. Columbia.
- f HUNTING WILD DEER (World of Sports)—A handsome film explaining the rules of deer hunting. The animal studies are delightful. Columbia.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 4—The regular savants with Louis Bromfield. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 5—The experts solve matters with Wendell Willkie's help. RKO Radio.
- f MARINE ROUND-UP (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A good film about the means used to stock a deep sea aquarium with sharks, rays and other huge fish. Paramount.
- f MASTER OF THE CUE (World of Sports)—Willy Hoppe demonstrates the game of billiards and a number of difficult and trick shots. Columbia.
- f MOTORCYCLE STUNTING (Sportlight)—Some wonderful stunt riding on motorcycles and also racing. Paramount.
- f RIVER THAMES, YESTERDAY (Fascinating Journey Series)—A lovely trip down the Thames from the country through London and out to the ocean. Done in Technicolor. Paramount.
- f SAVOY IN THE ALPS—A travelogue conducted through this alpine district in France with excellent pictures of the scenery, the inhabitants and their activities. Columbia.
- f SEEING IS BELIEVING (Paraphagic)—The first half of this picture is very timely, showing the modern farm equipment in comparison with the old time farm tools, and also showing the great use of steel on farms. The second half shows five scientists who make a hazardous trip down a dangerous river in small boats. Paramount.
- f SNOW EAGLES—A demonstration of excellent skiing. RKO Radio.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 2—Strange occupations such as using chewing gum to make pictures instead of paints; man too ill to work takes up embroidery as a paying occupation; how the government takes beavers from places where they destroy crops and puts them in rivers to make dams for irrigation purposes and pools for fish. This last part was most interesting. Paramount.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 1—The Mint—A descriptive trip through the Philadelphia mint. Columbia.
- f YOU, THE PEOPLE (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—A good exposé of election frauds. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f COMMUNITY SING No. 1 (series 5)—A concert of popular and old songs sung by the Song Spinners with Don Baker at the organ. Columbia.
- f GROWING UP—The progress made in the last six and a half years by the Dionne Quintuplets. RKO Radio.
- f RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY (Serial) Nos. 1-2. Dick Foran, Buck Jones. Original story by Oliver Drake. Directed by Ford Beebe and Ray Taylor. The villain tries to form a protective organization and so control all the claims in Death Valley but is opposed by the Riders of Death Valley. Universal.
- f WEDDING BILLS (Pete Smith Specialty)—About the troubles of a young man getting married with a modest bank account. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f FIRE CHIEF, THE (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck and his three nephews make things lively with their fire-fighting equipment. RKO Radio.
- f LONESOME STRANGER (Technicolor Cartoon)—A parody on the Lone Ranger and his heroic feats. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f MOUSE MEETS LION (Fable Cartoon)—An amusing adaptation of the old fable of the mouse saving the lion's life. Columbia.

- f PANTRY PIRATE (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Pluto in quest of a roast upsets a box of super-suds and sneezes himself into difficulties. RKO Radio.
- fj POOPDECK PAPPY (Popeye Cartoon)—Popeye's pappy makes plenty of trouble by not acting his age. Paramount.
- f POPEYE PRESENTS EUGENE, THE JEEP (Popeye Cartoon)—An amusing picture of Popeye trying to get some sleep with a jeep in the house. Paramount.

- f TIMBER—A Donald Duck cartoon with the redoubtable hero in the timber country. RKO Radio.
- f TROUBLE WITH HUSBANDS, THE (Benchley Comedy)—An amusing little skit wherein Benchley reveals what some housewives have to endure through the idiosyncrasies of their husbands. Paramount.
- f WISE OWL (Color Rhapsody cartoon)—An owl's appetite is sharpened by the prospect of some cute bats, who between dances foil his endeavors rather forcefully. Columbia.

List of Selected Pictures: January-December 1940

An alphabetical listing of the pictures selected for recommendation as good entertainment by the Review Committees of the Board from January 1st through December 31st, 1940. This listing, like that of 1939, is published in place of the former Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures.

Key to Abbreviations

- f—Family Audience (12 years up).
m—Mature Audience (18 years up).
j—Juvenile Audience (Under 13 years).
*—An above-the-average picture.

Month following picture refers to the Magazine Selected Pictures Guide in which reviewed.
ex—Indicates a review in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of the Magazine.

FEATURES

- f *ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS—RKO—Feb., ex.
fj ALDRICH FAMILY IN LIFE WITH HENRY, THE—Para.—Sept.
f ALIAS THE DEACON—Univ.—May.
m *ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO—Warner—Sept.
m AND ONE WAS BEAUTIFUL—Metro.—Apr.
f ANDY HARDY MEETS DEBUTANTE—Metro—Sept.
m ANGELS OVER BROADWAY—Col.—Nov.
f ANNE OF WINDY POPLARS—RKO—Sept.
f ARGENTINE NIGHTS—Univ.—Oct.
f ARISE MY LOVE—Para.—Nov.
f *ARIZONA—Col.—Dec.
m BAKER'S WIFE, THE (LA FEMME DU BOULANGER) Baker's Wife Inc.—Mar., ex.
f BEHIND THE NEWS—Rep.—Jan. '41.
f BEYOND TOMORROW—RKO—Apr.
m BILL OF DIVORCEMENT, A—RKO—Apr.
f BILLY THE KID'S GUN JUSTICE—Pro.—Jan. '41.
f BISCUIT EATER, THE—Para.—May, ex.
f BITTER SWEET—Metro—Dec.
f *BLACKOUT—U.A.—Dec.
f BLONDIE PLAYS CUPID—Col.—Dec.
fj BLUE BIRD, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
f *BOOM TOWN—Metro—Sept.
f BOYS FROM SYRACUSE—Univ.—Sept.
f *BRIGHAM YOUNG—20th Cent.—Oct.
f BROADWAY MELODY OF 1940—Metro—Feb.
f BROTHER ORCHID—Warner—Sept.
f BROTHER RAT AND A BABY—Warner—Feb.
fj BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN—Para.—Apr.
fj BULLET CODE—RKO—Mar.

- f CAPTAIN CAUTION—U.A.—Sept.
f CAPTAIN IS A LADY, THE—Metro—Sept.
f CAROLINA MOON—Rep.—Sept.
m CASTLE ON THE HUDSON—Warner—Feb.
f CHAD HANNA—20th Cent.—Jan. '41.
f CHARLIE CHAN IN PANAMA—20th Cent.—Feb.
f CHARLIE CHAN IN THE WAX MUSEUM—20th Cent.—Oct.
f CHARLIE CHAN'S MURDER CRUISE—20th Cent.—May.
fj CHARTER PILOT—20th Cent.—Dec.
f CHASING TROUBLE—Mono.—Feb.
fj CHEROKEE STRIP—Para.—Nov.
f CHRISTMAS IN JULY—Para.—Nov.
f CITY FOR CONQUEST—Warner—Nov.
f COMIN' ROUND THE MOUNTAIN—Para.—Sept.
f *COMRADE X—Metro—Jan. '41.
m CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY, THE—Warner—Sept.
f CONGO MAISIE—Metro—Feb.
m DANCE GIRL DANCE—RKO—Oct.
f DANCING ON A DIME—Para.—Sept.
f DARK COMMAND—Rep.—May.
m *DATE WITH DESTINY, A—Para.—Sept.
f DIAMOND FRONTIER—Univ.—Nov.
f *DISPATCH FROM REUTERS, A—Warner—Nov.
m DOCTOR TAKES A WIFE, THE—Col.—May.
f DOUBLE ALIBI—Univ.—Mar.
f DOWN ARGENTINE WAY—20th Cent.—Nov.
f DR. CHRISTIAN MEETS THE WOMEN—RKO—Sept.
f *DR. EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLETS—Warner—Mar., ex.
f DR. KILDARE GOES HOME—Metro.—Oct.
m DR. KILDARE'S CRISIS—Metro.—Dec.
f DR. KILDARE'S STRANGE CASE—Metro.—May.
m EARTHBOUND—20th Cent.—Sept.
f EAST OF THE RIVER—Warner—Dec.
fj *EDISON, THE MAN—Metro.—Sept.
f ELLERY QUEEN, MASTER DETECTIVE—Col.—Jan. '41.
f ELSA MAXWELL'S PUBLIC DEB No. 1—20th Cent.—Oct.
m *ESCAPE—Metro.—Dec.
m ESCAPE TO GLORY—Col.—Jan. '41.
f *FANTASIA—Walt Disney—Dec., ex.
m FIGHT FOR LIFE—Col.—Mar., ex.
f *FIGHTING 69th, THE—Warner—Feb.
fj FLIGHT ANGELS—Warner—Sept.
f FLIGHT COMMAND—Metro.—Jan. '41.
fj *FLORIAN—Metro.—Apr.
f FLOWING GOLD—Warner—Oct.
f FOLKET PA HOGBOGARDEN (THE PEOPLE OF THE HOGO FARM)—Scand.—Mar.
f *FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT—U.A.—Oct., ex.
f FORTY LITTLE MOTHERS—Metro—May.
f *FOUR SONS—20th Cent.—Sept.
f FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE, A—Warner—Sept.
f GAMBLING ON THE HIGH SEAS—Warner—Sept.
f GAUCHO SERENADE—Rep.—May.
j GAY CABALLERO, THE—20th Cent.—Nov.
f GHOST BREAKERS, THE—Para.—Sept.

- f GIRL FROM GOD'S COUNTRY, THE—Rep.—Sept.
 f GO WEST—Metro.—Jan. '41.
 f GODA VANNER OCH TROGNA GRANNAR (Good Friends and Peaceful Neighbors)—Scand.—Nov.
 f GOLD RUSH MAISIE—Metro.—Sept.
 f GOLDEN FLEEING, THE—Metro.—Sept.
 f GOLDEN GLOVES—Para.—Apr.
 f GRANNY GET YOUR GUN—Warner—Mar.
 m *GRAPES OF WRATH, THE—20th Cent.—Feb., ex.
 f *GREAT DICTATOR, THE—U.A.—Nov., ex.
 f GREAT MCGINTY, THE (Reviewed as DOWN WENT MCGINTY)—Para.—May.
 f GREAT PROFILE, THE—20th Cent.—Nov.
 m GREEN HELL—Univ.—Feb.
 f HALF A SINNER—Univ.—Mar.
 f HAUNTED HONEYMOON—Metro.—Oct.
 m HE MARRIED HIS WIFE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 m HE STAYED FOR BREAKFAST—Col.—Oct.
 f HENNESS LILLA MAJESTAT (HER LITTLE HIGHNESS)—Scand.—Dec.
 f HER FIRST ROMANCE—Mono.—Jan. '41.
 m *HERITAGE (AUX JARDINS DE MURCIE)—French Cinema Center—Nov., ex.
 f *HIRED WIFE—Univ.—Oct.
 m *HIS GIRL FRIDAY—Col.—Feb.
 f HIT PARADE OF 1941, THE—Rep.—Nov.
 f *HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES—Univ.—Mar.
 f *HOWARDS OF VIRGINIA, THE—Col.—Nov.
 f HUDSON'S BAY—20th Cent.—Jan. '41.
 f HULLABALOO—Metro.—Dec.
 m HUMAN BEAST, THE (LA BETE HUMAINE) Juno—Mar., ex.
 m I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE, BABY—Univ.—May.
 f I LOVE YOU AGAIN—Metro.—Sept.
 f I MARRIED ADVENTURE—Col.—Sept.
 m I WANT A DIVORCE—Para.—Sept.
 m I WAS AN ADVENTRESS—20th Cent.—May.
 f IF I HAD MY WAY—Univ.—May.
 f IL FIGLIO DEL CONTADINO or VOCE LONTANA (THE FARMER'S SON or VOICE FROM AFAR)—Pied.—Mar.
 f INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE—Univ.—Feb.
 f IRENE—RKO—May.
 f IT ALL CAME TRUE—Warner—Apr.
 f *IT'S A DATE—Univ.—Apr.
 f JENNIE—20th Cent.—Dec.
 m JOHNNY APOLLO—20th Cent.—Apr.
 m KALLE PA SPANGEN (CHARLIE THE INN-KEEPER)—Scand.—Feb.
 f KIT CARSON—U.A.—Oct.
 m *KITTY FOYLE—RKO—Jan. '41.
 f *KNUTE ROCKNE—ALL AMERICAN—Warner—Nov.
 f LA CONGA NIGHTS—Univ.—May.
 m LADY IN QUESTION, THE—Col.—Oct.
 f LADY WITH THE RED HAIR, THE—Warner—Jan. '41.
 f LEATHER PUSHERS—Univ.—Oct.
 f *LET GEORGE DO IT—Film Alliance—Dec.
 m LETTER, THE—Warner—Dec.
 f LIFE OF GIUSEPPE VERDI, THE—Esperia—May.
 f *LIGHTS OUT IN EUROPE—Mayer & Burstyn—Apr., ex.
 f LILLIAN RUSSELL—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f LION HAS WINGS, THE—U.A.—Feb.
 fj LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN, A—Univ.—Nov.
 f LITTLE MEN—RKO—Jan. '41.
 f LITTLE NELLIE KELLY—Metro.—Dec.
 f *LITTLE OLD NEW YORK—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f LONE STAR RAIDERS—Rep.—Jan. '41.
 f LONE WOLF KEEPS A DATE, THE—Col.—Jan. '41.
 m *LONG VOYAGE HOME, THE—U.A.—Nov., ex.
 f LOVE THY NEIGHBOR—Para.—Jan. '41.
 m *LUCKY CISCO KID—20th Cent.—Sept.
 m *LUCKY PARTNERS—RKO—Oct.
 f MAD MEN OF EUROPE—Col.—Sept.
 fj MAGIC IN MUSIC—Para.—Dec.
 m *MAN I MARRIED, THE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f MAN WHO TALKED TOO MUCH, THE—Warner—Sept.
 m MAN WHO WOULDN'T TALK, THE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 m MANHATTAN HEARTBEAT—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f MARK OF ZORRO, THE—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f *MARYLAND—20th Cent.—Sept.
 m MAYOR'S DILEMMA, THE—Film Alliance—May, ex.
 f MELODY RANCH—Rep.—Dec.
 f MEN AGAINST THE SKY—RKO—Oct.
 f MICHAEL SHAYNE, PRIVATE DETECTIVE—20th Cent.—Jan. '41.
 f MIDNIGHT LIMITED—Mono.—Apr.
 f MIND OF MR. REEDER, THE—Mono.—May.
 f MONEY AND THE WOMAN—Warner—Oct.
 f *MORTAL STORM, THE—Metro.—Sept.
 f MURDER IN THE AIR—Warner—Sept.
 f MURDER OVER NEW YORK—20th Cent.—Dec.
 m *MY FAVORITE WIFE—RKO—May.
 m MY LITTLE CHICKADEE—Univ.—Feb.
 f *MY LOVE CAME BACK—Warner—Sept.
 m *MY SON, MY SON—U.A.—Apr.
 f MYSTERY SEA RAIDER—Para.—Sept.
 f NEW MOON—Metro.—Sept.
 f NIGHT TRAIN—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f NO, NO, NANETTE—RKO—Jan. '41.
 m NO TIME FOR COMEDY—Warner—Oct.
 f *NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE—Para.—Nov.
 f *NORTHWEST PASSAGE—Metro.—Feb.
 m *OF MICE AND MEN—U.A.—Feb., ex.
 f OKLAHOMA RENEGADES—Rep.—Sept.
 f ON THEIR OWN—20th Cent.—May.
 f ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS—Univ.—Dec.
 f OPENED BY MISTAKE—Para.—Feb.
 fj ORPHANS OF THE NORTH—Mono.—Sept.
 f *OUR TOWN—U.A.—Sept.
 m OUTSIDER, THE—Film Alliance—May.
 f PALMS OF THE SILVER SAGE—Mono.—May.
 m *PASTOR HALL—U.A.—Oct.
 f PHANTOM SUBMARINE, THE—Col.—Jan. '41.
 m *PHILADELPHIA STORY, THE—Metro—Jan. '41.
 f PIER 13—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj *PINOCCHIO—RKO—Mar., ex.
 f POWER AND THE LAND—RKO—Nov., ex.
 m *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE—Metro.—Sept.
 f PRIDE OF THE BOWERY, THE—Mono.—Jan. '41.
 m PRIMROSE PATH, THE—RKO—Apr., ex.
 f PRIVATE AFFAIRS—Univ.—Sept.
 m QUEEN OF THE MOB—Para.—Sept.
 fj RAINBOW OVER THE RANGE—Mono.—Sept.
 f *RAMPARTS WE WATCH, THE—RKO—Sept.
 f RANGE BUSTERS, THE—Phoenix—Oct.
 fj RANGER AND THE LADY, THE—Rep.—Sept.
 f RANGERS OF FORTUNE—Para.—Oct.
 m RASPUTIN—Concord—Sept.
 m *REBECCA—U.A.—Apr., ex.
 m REMEMBER THE NIGHT—Para.—Feb.
 f *RETURN OF FRANK JAMES, THE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 m RETURN OF THE FROG, THE—Select—May.
 f ROAD TO SINGAPORE—Para.—Mar.
 f RHYTHM ON THE RIVER—Para.—Sept.
 f SAFARI—Para.—Mar.
 f SAINT'S DOUBLE TROUBLE, THE—RKO—Feb.
 f SAINT TAKES OVER, THE—RKO—May.
 f SANDY GETS HER MAN—Univ.—Dec.
 fj SANDY IS A LADY—Univ.—Sept.
 f *SANTA FE TRAIL—Warner—Jan. '41.
 m SATURDAY'S CHILDREN—Warner—May.
 f SCATTERBRAIN—Rep.—Sept.
 f *SEA HAWK, THE—Warner—Sept.
 f SECOND CHORUS—Para.—Jan. '41.
 f SECRET FOUR, THE—Mono.—Feb.
 m SEVEN SINNERS—Univ.—Dec.
 f SHE COULDN'T SAY NO—Warner—Jan. '41.
 f *SHOP AROUND THE CORNER, THE—Metro.—Feb., ex.
 f SIDEWALKS OF LONDON—Para.—Feb.
 f SKI PATROL—Univ.—May.
 f SO YOU WON'T TALK—Col.—Dec.
 f SON OF MONTE CRISTO, THE—U.A.—Jan. '41.
 f SOUTH OF SUEZ—Warner—Jan. '41.
 f SPORTING BLOOD—Metro.—Sept.
 fj *SPRING PARADE—Univ.—Nov.
 f STAGE TO CHINO—RKO—Sept.
 f STAR DUST—20th Cent.—Apr.
 m *STRANGE CARGO—Metro.—Mar.
 f SUICIDE LEGION—Film Alliance—May.
 m SUSAN AND GOD—Metro.—Sept.
 fj SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON—RKO—Feb.
 f THEY CAME BY NIGHT—20th Cent.—Mar.
 m THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT—Warner—Sept.
 m *THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED—RKO—Nov., ex.
 fj THIEF OF BAGDAD—U.A.—Nov.
 f THIRD FINGER, LEFT HAND—Metro.—Nov.
 f THOSE WERE THE DAYS—Para.—Apr.

- f THREE CHEERS FOR THE IRISH—Warner—Apr.
 f THREE MEN FROM TEXAS—Para.—Sept.
 f 'TIL WE MEET AGAIN—Warner—May.
 m TIME IN THE SUN—World—Oct.
 f TIN PAN ALLEY—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS—RKO—Sept.
 f TOO MANY GIRLS—RKO—Nov.
 m TOO MANY HUSBANDS—Col.—Apr.
 f TRIPLE JUSTICE—RKO—Oct.
 f TUGBOAT ANNIE SAILS AGAIN—Warner—Nov.
 m TURNABOUT—U.A.—Sept.
 m 21 DAYS TOGETHER—Col.—May.
 f TWO GIRLS ON BROADWAY—Metro.—May.
 fj UNDER TEXAS SKIES—Rep.—Nov.
 m VIGIL IN THE NIGHT—RKO—Feb.
 f VILLAIN STILL PURSUED HER, THE—RKO—Sept.
 f VIRGINIA CITY—Warner—Apr.
 m *WATERLOO BRIDGE—Metro.—Sept.
 f WAY OF ALL FLESH, THE—Para.—May.
 f WE WHO ARE YOUNG—Metro.—Sept.
 f WEST OF PINTO BASIN—Mono.—Dec.
 f WESTERNER, THE—U.A.—Nov.
 f WHEN THE DALTONS RODE—Univ.—Sept.
 m WOMEN IN WAR—Rep.—Sept.
 f *WORLD IN FLAMES—Para.—Nov.
 f WYOMING—Metro.—Oct.
 t YOU'RE NOT SO TOUGH—Univ.—Sept.
 f YOU'LL FIND OUT—RKO—Dec.
 f YOUNG AS YOU FEEL—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f YOUNG BILL HICKOK—Rep.—Nov.
 f YOUNG PEOPLE—20th Cent.—Oct.
 fj *YOUNG TOM EDISON—Metro.—Mar.

CARTOONS

- fj ALI BABA BOUND—Vita.—Apr.
 f ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL—20th Cent.—Apr.
 fj BILLPOSTERS—RKO—Sept.
 fj *BILLY MOUSE'S AKWAKADE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f BLACKBOARD REVIEW—Col.—Apr.
 fj BONE TROUBLE—RKO—Sept.
 fj CATNIP CAPERS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj DONALD'S DOG LAUNDRY—RKO—May.
 fj DONALD'S VACATION—RKO—Sept.
 fj FIGHTIN' PALS—Para.—Sept.
 f FIRE CHIEF, THE—RKO—Jan. '41.
 fj *FISHING BEAR, THE—Metro.—Feb.
 f GALLOPIN' GALS—Metro.—Dec.
 fj GOOFY'S GLIDER—RKO—Dec.
 f GREYHOUND AND THE RABBIT, THE—Col.—Apr.
 fj HARE AND HOUNDS—20th Cent.—Mar.
 fj HARVEST TIME—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f HOME ON THE RANGE—Metro.—Apr.
 fj HOMELESS FLEA, THE—Metro.—Dec.
 fj HOW WET IS MY OCEAN—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f IT MUST BE LOVE—20th Cent.—Apr.
 fj JUST A LITTLE BULL—20th Cent.—May.
 fj KICK IN TIME—Para.—May.
 fj KITTENS' MITTENS—Univ.—Feb.
 f LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS—20th Cent.—Nov.
 fj LITTLE BLABBERMOUSE—Vita.—Sept.
 fj LOVE IN A COTTAGE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj LUCKY DUCK, THE—20th Cent.—Oct.
 fj MIGHTY HUNTERS—Vita.—Feb.
 fj MILKY WAY, THE—Metro.—Sept.
 fj MR. DUCK STEPS OUT—RKO—Sept.
 fj MR. MOUSE TAKES A TRIP—RKO—Dec.
 f MOUSE MEETS LION—Col.—Jan. '41.
 fj MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING—20th Cent.—Mar.
 fj 100 PYGMIES AND ANDY PANDA—Univ.—May.
 fj ONION PACIFIC—Para.—Sept.
 f PANTRY PIRATE—RKO—Jan. '41.
 fj PILGRIM PORKY—Vita.—Apr.
 fj PLUTO'S DREAM HOUSE—RKO—Sept.
 fj POOPDECK PAPPY—Para.—Jan. '41.
 fj PORKY'S POOR FISH—Vita.—Sept.
 fj PROF. OFFKEYSKI—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj PUSS GETS THE BOOT—Metro.—Mar.
 fj PUT PUT TROUBLE—RKO—Sept.
 fj PUTTIN' ON THE ACT—Para.—Oct.
 fj ROVER'S RESCUE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj RUPERT THE RUNT—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj SNEAK, SNOOP AND SNITCH—Para.—Dec.

- fj SNIFFLES TAKES A TRIP—Vita.—Sept.
 fj SNUBBED BY A SNOB—Para.—Sept.
 fj STEALIN' AIN'T HONEST—Para.—Apr.
 fj SWISS SKI YODELERS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f TANGLED TELEVISION—Col.—Dec.
 f TIMBER—RKO—Jan. '41.
 fj TIMID PUP—Col.—Sept.
 fj TOM THUMB IN TROUBLE—Vita.—Sept.
 f WIMMIN HADN'T OUGHTA DRIVE—Para.—Sept.
 fj WIMMIN IS A MYSTERY—Para.—Sept.
 f WINDOW CLEANERS—RKO—Nov.
 f WISE OWL—Col.—Jan. '41.
 fj WOT'S ALL TH' SHOOTIN' FER—20th Cent.—May.
 fj YE OLDE SWAP SHOPPE—Col.—Sept.
 fj YOU CAN'T SHOE A HORSE-FLY—Para.—Sept.

COMEDIES AND NOVELTIES

- f ACQUITTED BY THE SEA—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f BESTED BY A BEARD—RKO—Sept.
 f CHEERIO MY DEARS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f DOUBLE OR NOTHING—Vita.—Apr.
 f HATS—RKO—Oct.
 f HIDDEN MASTER—Metro.—May.
 f HOME MOVIES—Metro.—Mar.
 f LABOR SAVERS—20th Cent.—Apr.
 fj NEW PUPIL, THE—Metro.—May.
 f PLEASE ANSWER—Metro.—Oct.
 fj SINGING DUDE, THE—Vita.—Sept.
 fj *STRAY LAMB—RKO—Sept.
 fj STUFFIE—Metro.—Mar.
 fj TAMING OF THE SNOOD, THE—Col.—Sept.
 f TROUBLE WITH HUSBANDS, THE—Para.—Jan. '41.
 fj WALDO'S LAST STAND—Metro.—Dec.
 f WHAT'S YOUR I. Q.? No. 1—Metro.—Mar.
 f WHAT'S YOUR I. Q.? No. 2—Metro.—Sept.
 f YOU NAZTY SPY—Col.—Feb.

INFORMATIONALS

- f AIR ARMY—RKO—Sept.
 f ARGENTINA—Para.—Apr.
 f BARON AND THE ROSE, THE—Metro.—Oct.
 f BEAUTIFUL BALI—Metro.—Jan. '41.
 f BEAUTIFUL SWITZERLAND—Col.—Feb.
 f BERTH OF A QUEEN—Col.—Sept.
 f BLUE STREAK, THE—Para.—Sept.
 f BUYER BEWARE—Metro.—Sept.
 f CALLING ON COLUMBIA—Metro.—Mar.
 f CAPITAL CITY—Metro.—Oct.
 fj CAT COLLEGE—Metro.—Sept.
 f CAVALCADE OF ACADEMY AWARDS—Vita.—Sept.
 f CAVALCADE OF SAN FRANCISCO—Metro.—Nov.
 f CLIMBING THE SPIRITS' HOME—20th Cent.—May.
 f CUBA—Para.—Feb.
 f DANGEROUS DOLLARS—Para.—Sept.
 f DREAMS—Metro.—Jan. '41.
 fj ESKIMO TRAILS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f *EYES OF THE NAVY—Metro.—Dec.
 f FASHION FORECASTS Nos. 7, 8—20th Cent.—Apr.—Sept.
 f FASHION TAKES A HOLIDAY—Col.—May.
 f FLAG OF HUMANITY—Vita.—Dec.
 fj FLAG SPEAKS, THE—Metro.—Apr.
 f FLOATING ELEPHANTS—Col.—Dec.
 f FLYING STEWARDESS—20th Cent.—Mar.
 f FULLBLOD—Scand.—Nov.
 fj FUTURAMA—Col.—Feb.
 f GOING PLACES No. 72-83—Univ.—Mar.—Oct.
 f *GOING PLACES No. 84-86—Univ.—Jan. '41.
 f GROWING UP—RKO—Jan. '41.
 fj *GUN DOG LIFE—Vita.—Sept.
 f HISTORIC VIRGINIA—Col.—Jan. '41.
 f HOLLYWOOD. STYLE CENTER OF THE WORLD—Metro.—May.
 f IN THE LAND OF PAGODAS—Col.—Sept.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE Nos. 5-13, 2nd Series Nos. 1-3, RKO—Feb.—Dec.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE, 2nd series Nos. 4-5—RKO—Jan. '41.
 f ISLE OF COLUMBUS—Para.—Feb.
 f ISLE OF MYSTERY—20th Cent.—Oct.
 f *ISLES OF THE EAST—20th Cent.—May.
 f JACK POT—Metro.—Apr.
 f JONKEPING—Scand.—Nov.
 f KNOW YOUR MONEY—Metro.—Apr.
 f KRING OENAS SLOTT—Scand.—Nov.

- f LAND OF FLOWERS—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f LIFE IN PARIS—Col.—Apr.
 fj *MARCH OF TIME, 6th series, Nos. 6-13; 7th series, Nos. 1-4—RKO—Feb.—Dec.
 f MEN WANTED—Vita.—Apr.
 f MIRACLE OF SOUND—Metro.—Dec.
 f MODERN NEW ORLEANS—Metro.—May.
 f NAVAJO LAND—RKO—Mar.
 f NEW HAMPSHIRE—Col.—May.
 f NEW HORIZONS—Vita.—Feb.
 f NIGHT DESCENDS ON TREASURE ISLAND—Metro.—Feb.
 f NORTHWARD HO—Metro.—Mar.
 fj NOT SO DUMB—Para.—Mar. —
 f OLD DOMINION STATE—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f *OLD NEW MEXICO—Metro.—Dec.
 fj OLD SOUTH, THE—Metro.—Feb.
 fj PACIFIC PARADISE—Para.—Sept.
 f PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL Nos. 1, 2—Para.—Feb.—Sept.
 f PICTURE PEOPLE No. 1—RKO—Oct.
 f PLEASUREBOUND IN CANADA—Col.—Sept.
 fj PONY EXPRESS DAYS—Vita.—Sept.
 f POPULAR SCIENCE Nos. 4-6; new series Nos. 1-2—Para.—Feb.—Dec.
 fj *QUICKER'N A WINK—Metro.—Dec.
 f RIVER THAMES, YESTERDAY—Para.—Jan. '41.
 f RODEO DOUGH—Metro.—Dec.
 fj *SANCTUARY OF THE SEALS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f SAVOY IN THE ALPS—Col.—Jan. '41.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS Nos. 5-7, 9—Col.—Sept.—Oct.
 fj SEATTLE, GATEWAY TO THE NORTHWEST—Metro.—Mar.
 f SEEING IS BELIEVING—Para.—Jan. '41.
 fj SERVANT OF MANKIND—Metro.—Sept.
 f SERVICE WITH THE COLORS—Vita.—Nov.
 f *SIEGE—RKO—Feb.
 f SITKA AND JUNEAU—Metro.—May.
 f SOAK THE OLD—Metro.—Oct.
 fj SPILLS FOR THRILLS—Vita.—Sept.
 f STADEN VID GOTA AIV (THE CITY OF GOTHENBURG—Scand.—May.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION Nos. 72-86—Univ.—Mar.—Dec.
 f STREAMLINED—RKO—Sept.
 fj *SUGAR WIND—Para.—Feb.
 fj SUVA PRIDE OF FIJI—Metro.—Sept.
 fj TEDDY THE ROUGH RIDER—Vita.—Feb.
 fj TELEVISION PREVIEW—Para.—Sept.
 f THREADS OF A NATION, THE—Col.—Apr.
 f TRIFLES OF IMPORTANCE—Metro.—Sept.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS Nos. 3-6; new series Nos. 1-2—Para.—Feb.—Jan. '41.
 f UNVEILING ALGERIA—Col.—Sept.
 f UTOPIA OF DEATH—Metro.—Dec.
 f VACATION DIARY—RKO—Feb.
 f VALLEY, THE—Vita.—Sept.
 fj VALLEY OF 10,000 SMOKE, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f VAR I SKANE (SPRINGTIME IN SCANIA, SWEDEN)—Scand.—Mar.
 f WASHINGTON PARADE Nos. 2-6, new series No. 1—Col.—Feb.—Jan. '41.
 m WAY IN THE WILDERNESS, A—Metro.—Sept.
 f WEST WALL—RKO—Feb.
 f WITH THESE WEAPONS—American Social Hygiene Assn.—Nov.
 m WOMEN IN HIDING—Metro.—Sept.
 f XXX MEDICO—Metro.—May.
 f YOUNG AMERICA FLIES—Vita.—Sept.

MUSICALS

- f BLUE BARRON AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Para.—Sept.
 f BLUE DANUBE, THE—Metro.—Feb.
 f CARL HOFF AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Vita.—Apr.
 f COMMUNITY SING Nos. 4-5, 7—Col.—May—April—Nov.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 1 (series 5)—Col.—Jan. '41.
 f HAVE YOU MET YVETTE—Para.—May.
 f HAWAIIAN RHYTHM—Univ.—Sept.
 f JIMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Para.—Feb.
 f JOE REICHMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Vita.—Dec.
 f *MAD MAESTRO, THE—Metro.—Feb.
 f MOMENTS OF CHARM OF 1941—Para.—Nov.
 f NAUGHTY NINETIES, THE—Univ.—Sept.

- f PINKY TOMLIN AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Para.—Sept.
 f SWINGIN' IN THE BARN—Univ.—May.

SPORTS

- fj ACTION ON ICE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj AQUAPOISE—RKO—Feb.
 f ARROW POINTS—RKO—Sept.
 f BOWLING FOR STRIKES—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f BOWLING SKILL—Para.—Feb.
 f COURT FAVORITES—RKO—Feb.
 fj CRADLE OF CHAMPIONS—Para.—Sept.
 fj *DIVING DEMONS—Para.—Oct.
 fj DOGS YOU SELDOM SEE—Vita.—Dec.
 fj FAMOUS MOVIE DOGS—Vita.—Nov.
 f FISHING IN HAWAII—Col.—Nov.
 f FLY FISHING—Vita.—Dec.
 f FLYCASTING—RKO—May.
 f FLYING TARGETS—Col.—Mar.
 f FOLLOWING THE HOUNDS—20th Cent.—Mar.
 fj FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS—Vita.—Nov.
 fj FOOTBALL THRILLS OF 1939—Metro.—Dec.
 fj GRADE OF CHAMPIONS—Para.—Sept.
 f HUMAN FISH—Para.—Feb.
 f HUNTING WILD DEER—Col.—Jan. '41.
 fj *HURDLE HOPPERS—RKO—Sept.
 f KENTUCKY ROYALTY—RKO—Nov.
 f LURE OF THE TROUT—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f MAINTAIN THE RIGHT—Metro.—Feb.
 f MASTER OF THE CUE—Col.—Jan. '41.
 f MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED Nos. 3-4—Vita.—Feb.—Sept.
 f MEN OF MUSCLE—RKO—Feb.
 f MIDGET MOTOR MANIA—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f MOTORCYCLE STUNTING—Para.—Jan. '41.
 fj *NATURE'S NURSERY—Para.—Nov.
 f ODD VOCATIONS—Col.—Sept.
 f ORIENTERINGSLÖPNING (PATHFINDERS)—Scand.—Feb.
 f OVER THE SEVEN SEAS—20th Cent.—Apr.
 f PA RENSILJNING I AKKA (REINDEER ROUNDUP IN AKKA, LAPLAND, SWEDEN)—Scand.—Feb.
 f PENNANT CHASERS—RKO—Mar.
 fj *PLAYMATES FROM THE WILD—Para.—Sept.
 fj QUAIL QUEST—RKO—Oct.
 f SAVING STROKES—Col.—Nov.
 f SILENT WINGS—RKO—Sept.
 f SINK OR SWIM—Para.—Sept.
 f SKIING TECHNIQUE—Col.—Mar.
 f SKY GAME—RKO—Feb.
 f SNOW EAGLES—RKO—Jan. '41.
 fj SNOW FUN—RKO—Dec.
 f SPORT OF KINGS—Col.—Sept.
 f SPORTING EVERGLADES, THE—Para.—Nov.
 fj SPORTSMAN'S PARTNER—RKO—Dec.
 f TOMORROW'S STARS—Col.—Sept.
 f TOPNOTCH TENNIS—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f TROUBLE SHOOTER—RKO—Sept.
 f TWO OF A KIND—Para.—Mar.
 f VACATION TIME—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f VI GAR PA LANGTUR (WE TAKE A LONG SKI TRIP)—Scand.—Feb.

SERIALS

- fj JUNIOR G-MEN Nos. 1-12—Univ.—Sept.—Oct.
 f KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED Nos. 1-12—Rep.—Oct.—Nov.—Dec.
 f RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY Nos. 1-2—Univ.—Jan. '41.

KEY TO DISTRIBUTOR ABBREVIATIONS

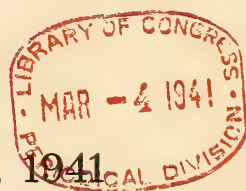
Col.—Columbia
 Film Alliance—Film Alliance of the United States
 Juno—Juno Films
 Mayer & Burstyn—Arthur Mayer & Joseph Burstyn
 Metro.—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
 Mono.—Monogram
 Para.—Paramount
 Pied.—Piedmont American Film Exchange, Inc.
 Pro.—Producers
 Rep.—Republic
 RKO—RKO Radio
 Scand.—Scandinavian Talking Pictures
 Select—Select Attractions
 20th Cent.—20th Century-Fox
 U.A.—United Artists
 Univ.—Universal
 Vita.—Vitaphone
 Walt Disney—Walt Disney Productions
 Warner—Warner Bros.
 World—World Pictures

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XVI, No. 2



February, 1941



A Stop-over in "Night Train"

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

- *m **BACK STREET**—Margaret Sullavan, Charles Boyer. Based on the novel by Fannie Hurst. Directed by Robert Stevenson. This is the second movie version of Miss Hurst's story of the tragic lives of two people in love who cannot marry and who solve the problem by setting up a clandestine menage. The situation being nothing new and the plot dated, the salient virtue of the film lies in its elaborate production, expert direction and excellent cast. As the unofficial spouse of the banker Miss Sullavan is lovely, nor, thanks to good make-up, does time wither her in less than lovely fashion as the years of her devotion roll by. Through her talent as an actress the somewhat unreal sentiments of the early nineteen hundreds have effects not readily expected on the sensibilities of a present day audience. Mr. Boyer, the rather selfish gentleman of the piece, also enacts his role with subtlety and art. On consideration the same difficulty today could be less painfully taken care of by divorce with slight prejudice to anyone, and very likely would be. For a sterner generation such facility seemed out of the question, so the tragedy. The film can hardly be interpreted as sympathetic to irregular living; both sinners have an awful time. Universal.
- *f **COME LIVE WITH ME**—James Stewart, Hedy Lamarr. Based on an original story by Virginia Van Upp. Directed by Clarence Brown. An improbable, delightful comedy tailored to James Stewart's charm and Hedy Lamarr's beauty. It concerns the problem of a refugee girl who needs a husband to prevent her deportation. A middle-aged publisher (Ian Hunter), who loves her but is already married, is the only available gentleman until she meets a down-and-out writer (Mr. Stewart) whom she persuades to marry her in name in exchange for a stake to enable him to carry on his literary work. Before long the author gets very dissatisfied with the businesslike elements in the deal and from that point the farcical complications begin, culminating in a pleasant affirmation of mutual affection between the right people. Although the picture drags in places, chiefly in the sequences where Stewart's grandmother dispenses sententious wisdom, the general effect is light and amusing. Donald Meek, a tramp of long standing and high attainments in his line of work, has a short but scintillating scene wherein he advises Jimmy to examine the advantages that a lad of his talent would have in becoming a bum. The others in the cast, which includes Verree Teasdale, turn in fine supporting jobs. It is to Stewart and to the director, Clarence Brown, however, that the lion's share of credit must be given for transforming a weak and synthetic script into a very entertaining movie. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- *f **FOUR MOTHERS**—Claude Rains, Jeffrey Lynn, Priscilla Lane. Suggested by the book "Sister Act" by Fannie Hurst. Directed by William Keighley. The family reunion of the elderly musician, Adam Lemp (Claude Rains), is upset by the news that the Florida real estate project of one of his sons-in-law has been washed away by a tidal wave and the family who have invested in it are left not only penniless but overwhelmed with moral obligations to other townsfolk whom they had allowed in on the ground floor with them. The crux of the film is the splendid way the entire clan rallies round and, though affairs grow fairly black, by intrinsic honesty and mutual affection conquer the grievances trouble engenders among them and finally the graver economic problems. The film is the latest in the series begun by "Four Daughters" and carries the domestic saga of the Lane sisters to that period in their lives when all but one are provided with adored offspring (and the final tip-off is she has not long to wait). Warner Bros.
- *f **GIRL IN THE NEWS, THE**—Margaret Lockwood, Barry K. Barnes, Emlyn Williams. Based on the novel by Roy Vickers. Directed by Carol Reed. The story of a nurse accused of poisoning a patient and acquitted on the ground of insufficient evidence. The acquittal does not suffice to save her career, however, and she changes her name to get work, only to find herself faced with a similar charge when she is blamed for the poisoning of her new employer, a murder cooked up by his wife and butler. In spite of a solution that is *deus ex machina* with the letters on it written in red, *The Girl in the News* is fast, thrilling and exceedingly good cinema. Emlyn Williams makes a fine cold-blooded murderer and the two other principals, Margaret Lockwood as the accused nurse and Barry K. Barnes as her

(Continued on page 13)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Movie Entertainment

ON the ballots which register the opinions of the members of the National Board's Reviewing Committee when they look at a picture there are four qualities that have to be marked for a rating: the picture's entertainment value, its artistic value, its instructive value, and its ethical value. These qualities have a different importance to different people, but one of them is important to everybody—the entertainment quality. A motion picture without that, wherever it was meant to be shown, might as well never have been made at all; it certainly will be put away in a tin can on a shelf somewhere as soon as possible, never to see the light of a public movie screen again.

"Entertainment" may be one thing to me and something a lot different to the person in the next seat, but for both of us it has to be something that keeps us sitting there willingly, giving ourselves up to what is happening on the screen in front of us. It may make us laugh, it may make us cry, it may thrill us, anger us, uplift us—but it can't bore us and still be entertainment. That is a loose word, entertainment, but it is hard to find a better one in spite of its implications of triviality and easy laughter. Probably the most essential element in it is its power to take us out of ourselves. A movie that can do that from beginning to end is entertainment in its completest sense.

Is it important what a thing does to us when it takes us out of ourselves? Not many people would say "No" to such a question.

Perhaps some infinitely delicate instrument will be found some day to measure what movies do to their audiences. But so far, for all the serious and even solemn attempts that have been made to isolate and analyze the special effects that motion pictures have on people, the results have been meagre and probably pretty inaccurate. No scientist has yet put his finger on the subtle psychological vitamins in movies and lettered them each with its peculiar nourishment and virtue. The poisons are easier to guess at, though their exact effect is hard to separate from other poisonous elements that aren't characteristic of movies at all. But one general thing is safe to assert—good movies are refreshing. "Refreshment" might be defined and split up to an infinite degree, but the word itself is as plain as what it stands for—and pleasure is its inevitable companion.

"Instructive" and "ethical" values are, in their positive senses, hard to be sure about. A girl in a small town may learn how a successful beauty does her hair; a boy with an inventive streak may learn how Tom Edison, when he was a boy, got going as an inventor—they have both been instructed in a way peculiar to their own needs. Some hero or heroine may stir something in an onlooker that does him good in the highest ethical sense. These things are individual matters largely, impossible to trace. But they couldn't happen if the picture didn't really take hold. Perhaps that's what entertainment does—it takes hold.

The Audience Discovers the Director

By MARGARET FARRAND THORP

Mrs. Thorp, lecturer and author of "America at the Movies," gave this talk before the delegates at the last Annual Conference of the National Board.

USUALLY when I am permitted to talk about the movies I have to begin by apologizing to the audience for my too great zeal. I believe that the motion picture is a great art form, that watching its advance is the most exciting artistic experience of our time, and I want as many people as possible to share that experience. I talk of it in consequence with what sometimes seems to the average audience to be too eager an enthusiasm.

To you, however, I feel that I may talk without apology. I assume you are all fellow fanatics, as excited about the movies as I am, that you are motion picture crusaders or, to change the figure so that it fits better into the New Frontiers title of this conference, that you are pioneer mothers of the screen. As pioneer mothers, and fathers, I take it for granted that you are interested not only in the movies as they are today but in the movies of tomorrow.

I wonder if in your scanning of the horizon for portents of the future any of you are accustomed to consult the movie advertising pages in the daily papers. Extremely interesting things are to be found there. In the last few weeks there have been among the movie advertisements two portents which seem to me of really great significance. They occurred in the advertisements for *Christmas in July* and *The Long Voyage Home*. The advertisements for *Christmas in July*, as you surely remember, carry a photograph of Preston Sturges wearing a white sweater, chewing a cigar, sitting at a typewriter, obviously working. The legend which accompanies the advertisement is: "He writes his own; he directs his own; he produces his own." The advertisements for *The Long Voyage Home* carry a small scene from the movie at the bottom of the advertisement and at the top a fairly large

reproduction of a portrait of John Ford by Georges Schreiber.

Apparently the publicity men believe that you can persuade some people to go to a movie by telling them who directed it. Apparently they believe that the audience is beginning to discover the director. If that is so, it seems to me a matter of great hope for the future of the motion picture as an art form, because the audience hitherto has been curiously neglectful of the real artists of the screen.

I talked last week with a very intelligent group of young women in Princeton. They were wives of instructors in the University and a great many of them are college graduates. They are not as directly interested in the movies as most of you are, but they are people with analytical minds who would not think they could enjoy a concert, for instance, without knowing something about musical form. I asked each of them—there were perhaps 30—to name 10 movie actors, and they had no trouble at all in doing it. I then asked them to name ten movie directors. Some of them were unable to name even one. Among them, by pooling their resources, they managed to get five names, and of those two or three were foreign.

How much better than that could you do in this group? (Voices from the audience: Leo McCarey, Preston Sturges, William Wyler, W. S. Van Dyke, Lloyd Bacon, John Ford, Frank Capra, etc.). That is fine. I am really delighted. It indicates to me exactly what I hoped, which is that a group of this kind is aware of the director's importance. And if you are aware of it, you can pass the knowledge on to the communities in which you are influential.

That is really the thing that I want to talk about, the matter of making people see how important a director is, of making them realize it. Don't you find, that in your realization of this you are a minority in your community? Have you ever tried the Name

Ten Directors question on anybody else? Go home and try it on your friends and see what happens. See also if they do not ask you, as these young women asked me, "What is the difference between a director and a producer? What does a director do?" They honestly do not know. They have never thought about it at all.

It seems to me an amazing situation that when an art is taking itself seriously, when it has the enormous possibilities of the art of the motion picture, the existence of the fundamental worker in that art should be unknown to the average member of the audience that enjoys what he produces. The only parallel to the situation that I can suggest is the case of the architects of the medieval cathedrals, the men who planned some of the most beautiful buildings we know. Scholars are just beginning to discover who those men were. It would seem to me a pity if the motion picture director must wait six hundred years for his reward.

There are two things that obscure to the average contemporary audience the importance of the director. One is the complex, cooperative nature of any screen enterprise. No one man can make a movie by himself, for making a movie is a very elaborate and expensive business. A director alone cannot make a movie. He must have cooperation from scores of craftsmen and mechanics as well as writers and actors, people who are important and fine artists in their own right—but the director is the most important of all. But what chiefly obscures the director is, of course, the brilliant effulgence of the stars, which blinds the average audience to everything else on the screen. Now, do not be alarmed, I am not going to try this afternoon to abolish the star system. Even if I thought that its destruction were desirable, it is far too intimately and intricately intertwined with the whole financial structure of the movies, too elaborately interwoven with our whole social life, to be casually got rid of. And I do not think it essential to destroy the star system in order to add a little more lustre to the importance of the director. Why cannot one knowledge and interest be added to another?

I think it is being added little by little; as your response just now indicated. The

National Board in working with its younger groups is, I understand, constantly stressing, and urging the teachers in the schools to stress, the importance of those who direct our pictures. The children are asked: What do you think of this director's work? What else do you remember that he has done? Your children, very probably, know more about directors than you do. They may even have taught you what you know.

Another indication of the growing importance of the director is the practice of using his picture in the previews of coming attractions. We are shown a director taking one of the shots in the film, or rehearsing a certain scene, or perhaps occasionally talking to us about the film. This is an increasingly common practice which seems to indicate that the industry feels that the public is becoming aware of the director as a person about whom they want to know more, with whose style and manner they want to familiarize themselves.

I think the amount of excitement that is being created at the present moment by both *Fantasia* and *The Great Dictator* is another interesting portent on the horizon of this new frontier. People realize that these films were made primarily by Disney and by Chaplin. They speak of them in those terms. They realize that there are individual artists back of each picture.

Another interesting development in the same line is the exhibit that is now on at the Museum of Modern Art here in New York. It is a very interesting presentation of the work of the great pioneer director, D. W. Griffith. There is also an excellent monograph, brought out by Miss Iris Barry in connection with the exhibit, which is a really serious study of a serious artist, one of the first great artists of the screen.

Another portent is a forthcoming book by Mr. Lewis Jacobs, author of *The Rise of the American Film*. He is now at work on a book which deals with the most important directors, their manners and methods, their styles and ideas. One is extremely impatient to have that book off the press. We know it will be valuable for we know how painstaking and thorough and authoritative Mr. Jacobs' work is.

I wish I might say that the motion picture critic is a portent, an assistant in increasing the importance of the director, but I do not think that most of them are. The average reviewer of the movies in the daily newspaper does not mention the director. He may put his name in the fine print at the top of the column where a list is given of everybody concerned, but I can think of only one or two critics who ever make the names of the director an important part of their reviews, and who comment on him as though he were an essential part of the performance, as a drama critic will comment on the playwright in speaking of a play. If you can do anything to make your local reviewer mention the director it seems to me it would be very helpful. If you are the local critic, or if you can influence him, try to make the theme of some reviews at least: "You will probably be interested in this film because such and such a man directed it." Or make a comparison between a director's work in a current film and the one that he directed the year before. Do the same sort of thing that one does with the actors.

I do not suppose that the average director wants to compete with the actor, to submit himself to the kind of personal publicity build-up which the stars are obliged to undergo. What they really wish is to be recognized by what they do, by the way in which they work. At the same time I do not think that a director could possibly object to having an audience more intelligently interested than most of them are today in what he is actually trying to accomplish, in having an audience that knows what they may legitimately ask of him. For instance, you would not then find audiences insisting that a director stick as close to the text of a novel as possible when he is translating it to the screen. I think, too, that directors would like to have an audience that knows whom to thank for a sound effect; whether it was simply a wonderful mechanical stunt for which the technicians should be admired, or a brilliant combination of sound and motion for which the director should receive the credit.

But, whether the discovery of the directors by the audience is of use to the director

or not, I am sure it is of use to the audience. If you could, for instance, not only name 8 or 10 or 20 directors, but be really familiar with their styles and manners, their ideals and ways of working, as you are familiar with the work of contemporary novelists and composers and painters, you would vastly increase your intelligent understanding of the whole art of the motion picture. That is the point towards which I hope you will direct your attention in some of your groups this winter: to make further discoveries yourself, and to influence your friends to discover, the importance of the director.

Book Reviews

The Best Pictures of 1939-1940

Edited by Jerry Wald & Richard Macaulay, Dodd, Mead & Co.—534 pages.

IN an attempt to serve the screen as Burns Mantle serves the stage, "Best Pictures" reviews the motion picture season in as many ways possible, as well as setting down for anyone's personal use, the scripts of some of the most memorable movies of the year covered. In this case, the editors have wisely avoided the problem of selecting any ten best films and instead have divided the season's produce into classes, these being action, biography, comedy, comedy-drama, drama, farce and tragedy. It is a question whether each year's important films will divide into these several classes as readily, but for the purposes of this book it works well. Representing the classes, in the order given, the stories of *Destry Rides Again*, *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet*, *Ninotchka*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Good-bye Mr. Chips*, *Bachelor Mother* and *Rebecca* are given in a very readable form with much of the original dialogue printed verbatim.

In the back of the book are listed vital production statistics as well as short synopses of about 200 important films and a short history of the season, while a listing of the sundry awards concludes the volume. By and large, this book should serve devotees of the screen just as ably as Mr. Mantle's annuals serve the play-goers.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Night Train

Screen play by Sydney Gilliat and Frank Launder from an original story by Gordon Wellesley, directed by Carol Reed, photographed by Otto Kanturek, musical score by Louis Levy, produced by Gaumont British Studios, London, distributed by 20th Century-Fox.

The Cast

<i>Anna Bomasch</i>	<i>Margaret Lockwood</i>
<i>Gus Bennett</i>	<i>Rex Harrison</i>
<i>Karl Marsen</i>	<i>Paul von Hernreid</i>
<i>Charters</i>	<i>Basil Radford</i>
<i>Caldicott</i>	<i>Naunton Wayne</i>
<i>Axel Bomasch</i>	<i>James Harcourt</i>
<i>Dr. Fredericks</i>	<i>Felix Aylmer</i>
<i>Dryden</i>	<i>Wyndham Goldie</i>
<i>Roberts</i>	<i>Roland Culver</i>
<i>Schwab</i>	<i>Eliot Makeham</i>
<i>Kampfenfeldt</i>	<i>Raymond Huntley</i>
<i>Cap. Prada</i>	<i>Austen Trevor</i>
<i>Controllor</i>	<i>Kenneth Kent</i>
<i>Admiral Hassinger</i>	<i>C. V. France</i>
<i>Gestapo Officer</i>	<i>Fritz Valk</i>
<i>Teleferic Attendant</i>	<i>Morland Graham</i>

IT is by now common knowledge that England has found a successor to its famed Alfred Hitchcock who acquits himself so well in Hollywood. For the recent importation, *Night Train*, has been catapulted to the top list by the New York Film Critics, six of whom have placed it on their ten-best lists. And deservedly so, for its director, Carol Reed, has an exciting tale to unfold and every detail is etched in the bitterest acid and claws mercilessly at the audience's nerves. Given a corking spy and counter-spy plot and a capable group of actors, he has boldly written in capital letters for all to read, a sinister and breath-taking and always honestly handled condemnation of Nazi methods. It is natural to suspect propaganda, but in this case, everything declared about Nazidom simply

supplies background and augments the blackness of the villain. Had it been done in peace-time, fictitious countries and rulers could have been used effectively but for their purposes here, the makers of *Night Train* have staged their thriller very much in the present and no opportunity is missed to increase the grim horrors and the harrowing suspense necessary to make the tale move. If this is propaganda, then it is unnecessary propaganda for the majority in America has already obtained the same impression of Nazi methods. But to this reviewer, the political undertones of the film merely serve to heighten to a brutal reality the issues of the drama.

Anna Bomasch and her father are living in Poland where the latter is conducting experiments on the processing of steel for ship-building at the time of the siege of Poland by Hitler. The scientist's results would be invaluable to either side, so the film, starting with the attack on Poland, shows the cunning, amazing methods of the British and German foreign agents to capture the scientist and, at the same time, his daughter. Rex Harrison plays the English agent with considerable wit and bravado while Paul von Hernreid, in brilliant contrast, plays his part with a face of steel, acting the brutal cog in the Hitler machine. His malevolence is especially grim and brooding. The action shuttles easily across the channel, pauses in a concentration camp, an English seaside resort, momentarily takes place in a night train to Munich and winds up on an Alpine peak, and it is all so swift and unexpected—so teeming with excitement—that audiences will gasp audibly if not scream outright.

It is not hard to find wherein the picture

is made so gripping. The acting is sure but not outstanding. The story alone was not enough to make it top-notch. Considerable use was made of cuttings from news reels to make parts of the film and two characters at least are lifted right from *The Lady Vanishes*, but all these parts are welded together by a master hand, Carol Reed's, and meaning is added on every turn by his relentlessly skillful direction. It would not be fair to give away the secret of the magnificent opening sequence which so admirably sets the tone for the film, but an idea of the type of treatment Reed ministers can be suggested by recalling the way in which he has an Englishman hastily board a moving train. The night is black and the mountain village strange. The Englishman is just able to swing his bag up

into the last car, the baggage car, and swing himself in after, only to find himself face to face with as many men as the car will hold—Hitler's men with stony faces and hungry eyes staring silently out from under their steel helmets. Or take the deft touch in a German bookstore where "Gone With the Wind" and "Mein Kampf" are given equal advertising space. These accents have nothing to do with the story but serve unerringly to chill the audience into a stark realization of the obstacles besetting the characters. The narrow veins into which the plot leads are etched that much more deeply by such touches and the final outcome becomes that much more important to the audience.

Rated Exceptional.

High Sierra

Screenplay by John Huston and W. R. Burnett from the latter's novel, directed by Raoul Walsh, photographed by Tony Gaudio, music by Adolph Deutsch, associate producer Mark Hellinger. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

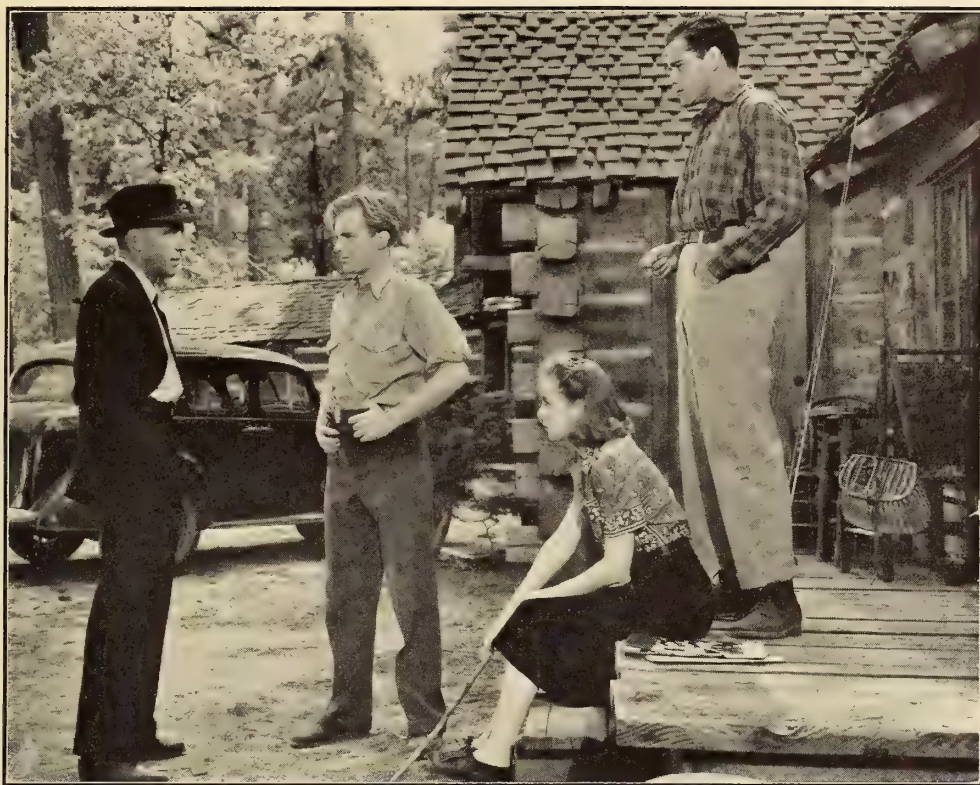
Roy Earle	Humphrey Bogart
Marie Garson	Ida Lupino
Babe	Alan Curtis
Red	Arthur Kennedy
Doc Banton	Henry Hull
Pa	Henry Travers
Velma	Joan Leslie
Ma	Elizabeth Ridsen
Mrs. Baughman	Minna Gombell
Big Mac	Donald MacBride
Louis Mendoza	Cornel Wilde
Jake Kranmer	Barton MacLane
Blondie	Isabel Jewell
Healy	Jerome Cowan
Algernon	Willie Best
Pard	Zero

IT isn't stretching a fancy too far to call *High Sierra* the *Götterdämmerung* of that striking cycle of gangster films the Warner Brothers started years ago with *Public Enemy* and *Little Caesar*. Old themes, familiar motifs, weave together toward a tragic climax, and the end, implicitly and explicitly, seems actually an end of something, a summing up and final disposal. In the course of time these pictures have explored the surfaces of gangsterdom too thoroughly to leave much novelty for a finale like *High Sierra*.

The tough idiom of speech and action hasn't the bite of something freshly observed and freshly reproduced, and as a moral lesson "Crime Doesn't Pay" has lost most of whatever edge it may once have had—didn't it often pay quite handsomely for a while? But somehow this last film seems to have gathered up the time-worn material with a surer hand, invested it with deeper if gloomier color and shaped it to a theatrical grandeur that has elements of genuine tragedy in it.

Few people seem able to look at this picture with impersonal detachment and see it outside of a relation to something else. To see it, for instance, as an extraordinarily able job of picture-making—plotting, writing, directing, photographing, acting, final putting-together. Being a gangster picture it almost inevitably gets itself colored with memories of other gangster pictures, and all the emotions, for or against, that those other pictures stirred up.

With all its incidental likenesses to the type, *High Sierra* is different. It isn't a story of a convict out of prison resolved to go straight and finding the old life dragging him back into crime. It isn't a story of a glamorous criminal having everything his own way up to the final retribution. It isn't even a story of a man made criminal by bad environment, a victim of social conditions.



Bogart, Kennedy, Lupino and Curtis in "High Sierra"

We don't know what made Roy Earle a criminal, or even for what crime he was sent to prison—we know only that he hated prison, loved freedom better than life, and that somehow strings were pulled to get him free so he could help his old boss pull off one big robbery from which his share would enable him to get far away and stay free. Almost from the first sight of him we know he is doomed, not by the formula that every movie criminal must be punished in the end but by those things in himself that have made him an outcast, that have somehow taken a simple farm boy and put him on the road that—as one of his friends says—"rushes on toward death." Doomed he is: all the good things that allure him are beyond his reach, it is only among outcasts like himself that he finds contact and warmth, every decent thing he does is a fatal thing for his own safety, and there isn't a moment in his life with enough security or happiness in it to make that life enviable or even worth living. His final extinction on the mountain top is truthfully enough, though

it is pointed up in a singularly maudlin and repellant anti-climax, as much a release as a punishment.

It is seldom enough that we get true tragedy on the screen: that tragedy which grows out of character instead of out of plot, and which arouses a sort of awe and terror along with pity. The tragedy of *High Sierra* has an ironic twist—it was the soft side of Roy Earle that betrayed him: if he had been completely tough, the perfect bad man, it would have been a quite different story. But it is a mistake to think that making him a figure to be sorry for is giving him a sympathy that glorifies him: he is less likely than almost any character on the screen to make an emulative adolescent go out and try to do likewise.

The picture has almost an overtone of being the Warner farewell to gangsterdom. The cycle seems to have run its course: until there is something new to say about the subject there's little point in saying anything. Gangsterdom, as the bed-ridden old Big Shot

says in this picture, isn't what it used to be. Lots of things have helped to make that true, and probably the gangster movies have had their part in it. As a farewell, with a sly incidental air of ironic nostalgia, it sums up most of the qualities that made this sort of thing such effective material for the movies, and as a final sharp comment, in the radio broadcast that exploits the chase of "Mad Dog" Earle into the mountains as an unholy show for a sensation-hungry public, it adds a

postscript to the subject of crime as entertainment that is pretty gruesome. If one could see—and endure—all the good gangster films that have been made, and see them as new, *High Sierra* might well loom up as one of the best and most penetrating. Certainly some of the things in it, particularly the supremely good acting of Humphrey Bogart, rank with the most memorable things in this type of picture.

Rated Honorable Mention.

An Actually Photographed Play

WITH the excellent purpose of broadening the audience of the acted play, a company called Theatre-on-Film is now engaged in making talking movies of selected Broadway plays. Made on 16 mm. film, the pictures will not be shown in the usual commercially operated motion picture theatres but will be released

for the use of churches, schools, colleges and similar educational organizations interested in the theatre but prevented by their location or finances from attending stage productions.

The first film on this new program is Maxwell Anderson's play on an episode in the early life of Jesus, called *Journey to Jerusalem*, produced in New York last year. The movie presents the play uncut and with its original cast and settings. "Theatre-on-film" is a more accurate term than "movie", for only in the sense that the drama is pro-



The Family at Nazareth from "Journey to Jerusalem"

jected on a screen and that close-ups are employed can it be called a "movie". Actually the camera functions in almost precisely the same way as the eyes of someone sitting in a good seat in the audience. After the essential program data about the people concerned in the performance, a title describes the first scene, the actual picture begins with a curtain rising, and the play starts. At each scene's close the curtain is lowered and a title giving the next scene appears, just as though you had consulted your program. It is a photographed play in the literal sense and makes no pretense of being cinematic. The settings are stage settings, the actors move and declaim in the fashion of the stage, and with the exception of the close-up the camera is static and the action of each section is restricted to the limits of the stage. At first all this is likely to appear rather stilted to eyes accustomed to expect extreme realism and mobile photography on the screen, but the spectator becomes adjusted to it in a surprisingly short time.

This is no place for a critical discussion of the play itself: the drama critics have voiced their praise and their dispraise, and Mr. Anderson's ambitious and thoughtful work would be relegated to the library shelf but for this interesting attempt to restore it to a play's only true life: performance before an audience. Aside from extending the pleasures of the theatre to people who can't have them at first hand, Theatre-on-Film provides an excellent way to see plays; in fact, with the addition of color *Journey to Jerusalem* would be perfect theatre in the physical sense, transferred bodily to a screen which you can see better, and from which you can hear better, than is usually possible in the playhouse itself, and you have the comfort of saving all the time taken up in scene-shifting between acts.

If Theatre-on-Film can go on from its promising beginning, it can preserve and extend the life of many fine plays in their original form, plays lacking in the qualities that invite cinematic reproduction in the commercial studios but, as a special part of our literature, worthy of something more than the occasional attention of the drama student in a library.

Army Men Movies

"WHAT kind of movies do the soldiers like?" It is not surprising that this question is pondered now that army camps are being established near to many communities where there are Motion Picture Councils. Since the work of a Council is planned to consider the community as a whole, the boys at the camps will get their share of attention as temporarily adopted sons.

One group of soldiers can pretty well speak for all, as each represents boys with varied backgrounds coming from cities, villages and farms, from schools and from jobs. So to the question we can offer an answer from opinions given by the soldiers at Governor's Island, New York, when following a talk on the motion picture, they were asked to say what they themselves thought about the picture.

And what did they say? Knowing that their present activities were likely to provide the background for many screen stories to come they said they would like pictures about the various branches of military service to be realistic not sentimental. In fact they stressed realism in all kinds of pictures. They want pictures to be like life. "Now, *Kitty Foyle* was a good picture," it was said, "because it might have happened." Kitty made them talk about love in pictures, and love pictures, they said, were all right if the girl was sprightly, like Ginger Rogers; but they don't care for mushy girls. One 6-footer said "Love making is nice in the movies but it's too short." Still talking about girls, other actresses rating high with them were Bette Davis and Claudette Colbert. Male stars favored were Cary Grant and Spencer Tracy. However much they liked their individual stars there was a united demand for all-star casts like *Gone With the Wind* and *Boom Town*. They said it was disappointing to see a star in a picture they didn't like, using as example Charles Laughton in *Sidewalks of London*.

Plenty of praise was heard for *Gone With the Wind*. They thought it was a wonderful picture "that had everything." Comment on this film brought out the rather wistful re-

mark from one boy, that he would like to have *The Birth of a Nation* made again, he had heard his father talk so much about it as a fine motion picture. Next to *Gone With the Wind* the picture they liked and wanted to talk about was *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. There was appeal for them in the struggling experiences of the hometown boy in the Nation's capitol.

They joined the army of cycle-objectors everywhere in saying that they got bored with too many films of one kind, but reasonably admitted it was pretty hard to find variety for every night in the week. The new, attractive, and very well equipped Fort Jay Theatre on Governor's Island has a change of program five times a week, and they don't want to see a picture on Thursday night that's little different from the one they saw on Tuesday. Many of them came to the discussion from a showing of *Diamond Frontier* and were looking forward to seeing *City for Conquest* and *They Knew What They Wanted* to follow soon. They were like other audiences in another way for they didn't like double features. But agreeing with the voters in the Gallup Poll, they said they wouldn't mind so much if one picture of the two wasn't poor, but that it usually was. They have double features at their theatre on Saturdays only.

They don't feel, surprisingly, that there is too much talk in pictures, even in the so-called dialogue pictures. So far they haven't seen *Philadelphia Story*, but they hear "it's very good and with a lot of talk." They would welcome all pictures in color. It makes them seem more real. For example, they want to know the exact color of the girl's hair in the movie, they like her better if they know whether she's a brunette or red-head.

They vigorously demand accuracy in their pictures, they don't want to be made to believe a thing is so if it isn't. How truly are professions and activities presented on the screen, they want to know. They ask if *Dr. Kildare's Strange Case* could have happened, was it possible to do what the doctor did there, or was it just a plot. They agreed that service pictures presenting their activities should be exact and correct in all details.

A discussion of biographical films brought out the statement that the life of King Albert of Belgium would make an inspiring movie. One khaki clad youth speaking with a decided foreign accent said that he had learned much English from the movies. The audience showed a lack of interest in the question of motion picture censorship when some one mentioned it. One objection was registered to too many killings in pictures.

Tactfully they wouldn't admit when they went to the movies with a girl whether she or they chose the picture, but there doesn't seem to be any doubt about the free discussion of movies and movie preference among them when they are on their own in the army. One soldier drew himself up and said, "I have to not talk all day and do I like this 'shooting my mouth off' about the movies at night."

Best Pictures Through the Year

IT seems somewhat early in the year to be thinking of the December vote on the best pictures of 1941. However, while pictures which may merit this distinction are just as likely in January or February as October or November, they may not be remembered when other good ones have been coming along for attention.

In order that the Council groups throughout the country who make up this compilation of the 10 best may find it easier to recall all those that should have consideration when the time of year for the voting arrives, we are suggesting a plan whereby a selection of the best pictures each month can be recorded which will provide a lengthy preferred list from which final selection can be made. Councils will hear more by letter about this soon, but if any other film groups want the information we will be glad to learn of their interest.

In the meantime there will be noted in this issue of the Magazine a new arrangement in the Selected Pictures Guide, in which those pictures that through the month have been rated by the Review Committees of the Board as starred-selected are given longer reviews and first listing.

The qualities which justify the recommendation of these pictures for entertaining theatre attendance also make them the most interesting pictures for discussion by film study groups, and thus the special listing is deserved and we hope will prove helpful.

1941 is off to a good start and we believe that before the finish there will be a growing list of best pictures to add interest to movie going and to movie study.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

defense attorney, are sympathetic and adept in realizing their roles. Carol Reed directs the film so as to exploit the suspense to the utmost and in the court scenes has created a wealth of detail in setting and character revelation not too often encountered in the movies. (British Production) 20th Century-Fox.

*fj **LAND OF LIBERTY**—Edited by Cecil B. DeMille. For showing at the New York World's Fair, Cecil B. DeMille and skillful assistants arranged as the motion picture industry's contribution to an exposition of American ideals an exhaustive compilation of selections from almost countless movies to illustrate the birth and growth of freedom in this country. It made a film of impracticable length for ordinary showings, so it has been cut down to more normal theatre length. The necessary abbreviation and condensation inevitably puts most of the emphasis on action, with the result that wars and fighting loom pretty preponderantly as the chief elements in our history. Yet one of the most impressive and memorable episodes is quite another kind of war—that on yellow fever. The film is a tremendously difficult job well done, and it is hard to think of anyone who won't find something in it to enjoy. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

*f **TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME**—Cesar Romero, Virginia Gilmore. Original screen story by Karl Tunberg and Darrell Ware. Directed by H. Bruce Humberstone. The grim saga of the American racketeer has never been used more expertly for the purposes of satire and comedy than in this film. All the old gangster material is exhumed and freshened up. Shep Morrison, the handsome chief of the shake-down racket, sees a pretty girl employed in the children's department of a large store and hires her to be the governess of his two non-existent little sons. He manages to get one urchin into his house before she arrives for duty, but the cat is let out of the bag when a rival gangster breaks into the place for a parley. The action of the piece depends on

the antagonism between the two racketeers for power and the girl; that everything is solved comfortably goes without saying. The farce is maintained at high pitch by the virtuosity of the director and the cast, of which Romero, who never has been better, takes the first honors. 20th Century-Fox.

*m **THIS THING CALLED LOVE**—Rosalind Russell, Melvyn Douglas. Based on the play by Edwin Burke. Directed by Alexander Hall. A breezy little affair fabricated out of the more salty elements of married life. For mature people who don't curl up at an amusing sex angle the picture will be great fun. It's based on the cross-purposes of a newly wedded couple the lady of which has ideas about temporary continency as a stabilizer of future married life. The complications developing from this state of affairs provide the laughs and the opportunity for the stars to turn in one of their smoothest and most word-witty performances. Particularly effective is the musical score furnished by Werner Heyman, which points up the moods with hilarious results. Columbia.

*f **VIRGINIA**—Madeleine Carroll, Fred MacMurray, Stirling Hayden. Original screen story by Edward H. Griffith and Virginia Van Upp. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. Virginia here joins the march of the states in the movies, as handsome a Technicolor background as any director could want for his story. Edward H. Griffith should have had everything as he wanted it in this production, with a credited hand in the writing as well as the directing and producing. It is in the two latter capacities that he comes off most successfully. The story is likely to arouse mixed feelings: it is a curious blend of nostalgia, sectional loyalties and bitterness, romance and sharp social comment. The return of a lovely daughter of the state, after so long an absence that she has been cut off entirely from her inherited traditions, fans up resentments that have been smoldering since the war between the states, for her intention to sell her ancestral home to rich and effete Northerners encounters resistance among her neighbors, and, to her surprise, in herself. On the whole it is a still rebellious, unreconstructed South that the story pictures, whether truthfully is for those who know to say. For those who are indifferent to that aspect of it, and who like old fashioned romance with its glamor contrasted with playboy modernity, it has plenty of dramatic interest, some laughter and a pull at the emotions. Fred MacMurray and Madeleine Carroll are their familiar selves, and a stalwart blond young man named Stirling Hayden and a small girl named Carolyn Lee will make friends who will want to see them again. Paramount.

*f **WESTERN UNION**—Randolph Scott, Robert Young, Dean Jagger. Based on the novel by Zane Grey. Directed by Fritz Lang. If you have a friend who disparages that great American institution, the "western," your ideal foil for his arguments will be *Western Union*. The

picture has the correct proportion of Indians and plainsmen, love and comedy, gunfire and suspense, horses and thrills, all joined in pleasing harmony and then abetted by stunning color photography to make the picture one of the best of its kind. In the background is the story of the frontiersmen in the pay of the Western Union Telegraph Company forging their way across the wastes from Omaha to Salt Lake City and the constant menaces which balked their progress. In the foreground is a good Zane Grey yarn of Randolph Scott, a homespun horseman, coping with a wild tribe of Indians who are controlled, through the instrument of rum, by Barton MacLane, an arch villain. *Western Union* packs a very substantial wallop, well above the belt, and much of it becomes truly memorable because of the magnificent Technicolor used by Fritz Lang in telling the tale. 20th Century-Fox.

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

- f AFTER "MEIN KAMPF"—Made in England, this "story of Adolph Hitler" covers the principal surface facts of the rise of Nazi power, by means of newsreels and the re-enacting of certain episodes and elements. Almost savagely anti-Nazi in tone, it is an interesting piece of propaganda, very effective in spots. Recommended for schools and libraries.
- f BLONDE INSPIRATION — John Shelton, Virginia Grey. Based on the play by John Cecil Holm. Directed by Busby Berkeley. Excellent comedy based on the trials of a young and enthusiastic man of letters making frantic attempt to have his "great American novel" published. He is fooled into ghost writing for an impecunious pulp magazine but there he meets the girl and in the end all is well. Acting is good, particularly that of the supporting cast. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f BUCK PRIVATES—Bud Abbott, Lou Costello. Original screen story by Arthur T. Horman. Directed by Arthur Lubin. A picture of life among the men drafted for the army, highly romanticized of course. The comedy is very good of its kind and there are interesting shots of war games. The Andrews Sisters provide most of the music. Universal.
- f CONVOY—Clive Brook. Original screen story by Patrick Kirwin and Pen Tennyson. Directed by Pen Tennyson. The story of the British convoy handsomely staged and enacted by a fine cast and the Royal Navy on duty in the English Channel. The battle sequences are particularly thrilling and a good deal of attention is given to naval detail. There is romance and propaganda but both these elements are insignificant beside the brisk action and stirring qualities of the film. RKO Radio.
- f GOLDEN HOOFS—Jane Withers, Charles (Buddy) Rogers. Original screen story by Roy Chanslor and Thomas Langan. Directed by Lynn Shores. Miss Withers, as a Southern lass interested in pacing horses, has her first love urge when she persuades a rich Yankee race horse breeder, who has bought the famous stables where she grew up, not to sell the trotting thoroughbreds but to give them a share of the farm to live on, thus saving sulky racing tradition and her pets. Splendid racing shots and handsome fillies sunnied o'er with sentiment and Jane's peculiar vivacity. 20th Century-Fox.
- f INVISIBLE WOMAN, THE—John Barrymore, Virginia Bruce. Original screen story by Kurt Siodmak and Joe May. Directed by A. Edward Sutherland. The hero is patron to an inventor who is working on an experiment to render people invisible. The first victim is a girl. The young patron falls for her, sight unseen, and finally rescues her and the professor from some gangsters who aim to use the invention to return to America. Barrymore is at his comic best and is abetted by Charles Ruggles and a fine cast in making the film one of the funniest take-offs on pseudo-scientific films for a long time. Universal.
- f LONE RIDER RIDES ON, THE—George Houston. Original screen story by Joseph O'Donnell. Directed by Samuel Newfield. The Lone Rider hunts down the gang who had murdered his family when they tried to take possession of a ranch they had bought. Under the name of a man they had killed, he finds the head of the ring and finally destroys it. The usual Western material is included, with singing and a rather better than average plot. Producers.
- f MAISIE WAS A LADY—Ann Sothorn, Lew Ayres, Maureen Sullivan, C. Aubrey Smith. Original screen story by Betty Remlarde and Myles Connolly. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Taking a temporary job as maid, Maisie sets things right in a very rich mansion of aching hearts, and appears to have won a husband. Lively and spirited version of Cinderella getting her prince. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f MEET THE CHUMP—Hugh Herbert. Original screen story by Hal Hudson and Otis Garrett. Directed by Edward Cline. A delightful piece of nonsense cut to Herbert's order about a financier who had charge of his nephew's money to hold until the youth is married on his twenty-fifth birthday. Meanwhile the uncle has lost five million of it in philanthropies and phoney stock, and attempts to prove himself insane to avoid prison. Excellent slapstick. Universal.
- m MR. AND MRS. SMITH—Robert Montgomery, Carole Lombard, Gene Raymond. Original screen story by Norman Krasna. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Good comic idea stretched a bit long. After three years of wedded life, Mr. and Mrs. are embarrassed by a technical flaw in their marriage license. Humorous Hitchcock management of details and excellent Montgomery. RKO-Radio.

f **RIDE KELLY RIDE**—Eugene Pallette, Marvin Stephens. Based on a story by Peter B. Kyne. Directed by Norman Foster. An orphan, born to the saddle, is adopted by a race-horse trainer and educated to become an expert jockey and to adhere to honest racing rather than accept bribes to pre-determine the race's results. The training required of a good jockey is entertainingly told despite a weak plot. 20th Century-Fox.

f **RIDIN' ON A RAINBOW**—Gene Autry. Original screen story by Bradford Ropes. Directed by Lew Landers. A pleasant Western with a good many musical numbers provided by Gene and other members of the cast. The plot is built around the presence on board a showboat of a girl whose father helped some gangsters rob a bank and kill the owner. Gene believes the girl knows the whereabouts of her father and of the stolen money and he joins the show to ferret out the information. Needless to say by the end of the picture all is set aright and everyone is satisfied. Republic.

fj **SCATTERGOOD BAINES**—Guy Kibbee. Based on the story by Clarence Budington Kelland. Directed by Christy Cabanne. It's wholesome with a vengeance. The small town seer, spreading wise advice and prospering with no shadow to sully his business escutcheon, puts to defeat a pair of scheming fellows who would ruin the community if their enterprise found reality. Kibbee turns in a solid job and pretty well dominates the picture with the rest of the cast providing good background. RKO-Radio.

f **VI PA SOLGLANTAN**—Dagmar Ebbesen, Rut Holm. Original screen story by Sven Zetterstrom. Directed by Eunnar Olsson. A rich real estate man attempts to buy up the property of a small suburban settlement devoted to truck gardening and week-end merriment for the purpose of erecting a factory and so furthering progress. Actually he intends it for a tenement site. His duplicity is discovered and the plan is foiled. Excellent characterizations and photography with plenty of local color and music. (Swedish with English sub-titles) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

f **VIE TVA**—Signe Hasso, Sture Lagerwall. Original screen story by Ragnar Hylten-Cavallius. Directed by S. Bauman. A comedy dealing with an architect's professional troubles in getting ahead and his marital troubles in getting a friend's wife out of his mind. The birth of a son solves both problems. (Swedish with English sub-titles) Scandinavian Talking Pictures.

f **WILD MAN OF BORNEO, THE**—Frank Morgan, Billie Burke. Based on the play by Marc Connelly and Herman J. Mankiewicz. Directed by Robert B. Sinclair. A delightful story of a grifter who tries to be a great man

for the sake of his daughter whom he has not seen since she was three, and of the inevitable exposure of his pretensions. The entire cast is good, but chief honors go to Frank Morgan and Billie Burke who never have been better. Humorous, sentimental in the nice way and well produced. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals:

- f **CALIFORNIA THOROUGHBREDS** (Sports Parade)—A handsome film of the training given a colt to prepare him for the track. Vitaphone.
- f **DIARY OF A RACING PIGEON, THE** (Sports Parade)—The life of a racing pigeon from birth to championship. Vitaphone.
- fj **GREAT MEDDLER, THE** (Miniature)—How the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals came to be founded, back in the 1860's. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 6**—The permanent quartet with their search for information made easier by the presence of Miss Jan Struther. RKO Radio.
- f **ISLANDS OF THE WEST INDIES** (Tour)—An interesting trip through the principal ports of Trinidad, Curacao and Martinique. Columbia.
- f **MARCH OF TIME, THE, NO. 5** (7th Series)—"Labor and Defense, U.S.A." An excellent resumé of the labor movement and the legislation that fortified its rights up to the present emergency. The film touches upon the problem of Labor's internal difficulties in relation to national defense. RKO-Radio.
- f **MARCH OF TIME, THE, NO. 6** (7th Series)—"Uncle Sam, the Non-Belligerent". A study of the progress of the U. S. A. from the status of a neutral at the start of the war to its present position of giving all aid short of war to Britain and the other democracies. Frankly pro-British, the film gives a vivid account of the background and the incidents both at home and abroad that have changed our position since the war began. RKO-Radio.
- f **MARCH ON MARINES** (Technicolor Special)—An interesting film showing highlights in the life of U. S. Marines with an added story of the good-natured rivalry of two brothers who are fond of the same girl and aiming at a single Annapolis appointment. Vitaphone.
- f **MAT MEN** (Sportscope)—The fine points of amateur wrestling are sharply distinguished from the crudities of professional wrestling by a college squad of wrestlers. RKO Radio.
- f **MEDITERRANEAN PORTS OF CALL** (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—A trip in Technicolor to Algiers and Monaco. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **MEET THE STARS NO. 2** (1st Series)—Harriet Parsons takes you to the reception given to the thirteen new starlets chosen by the directors this year. Republic.
- f **MEXICAN JUMPING BEANS** (Hollywood Novelty)—A family of Mexican acrobats demonstrates intricate stunts. Vitaphone.
- f **MODERN HIGHWAY, THE** (Adventures Newscamerman)—A pictorial record of the development of the modern system of highways to care for the increasing burden they must carry more safely and easily. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **MORE ABOUT NOSTRADAMUS**—An interesting picturization of the fulfillment of his prophecies in old and modern times. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **NICE WORK IF YOU CAN DO IT** (Cinescope)—Interesting glimpses of unusual jobs, such as cartooning, decorating and trick photography. Columbia.
- f **OLD AND NEW ARIZONA**—A tour through the state with stops at places of historical and scenic interest. Handsome photography. Col.
- fj* **OLD NEW ORLEANS** (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—Fitzpatrick gives one of his best Traveltalks on one of our most picturesque American cities. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f PENNY TO THE RESCUE—A young husband prepares dinner for his friends, helped out almost entirely by a good-hearted neighbor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PICTURE PEOPLE NO. 5—Stars and their avocations including an amusing bit with John Barrymore and Rudy Vallee. RKO Radio.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 3—A short in Technicolor showing new advances in optics, rubber compounds, hybrid vegetables, etc. Paramount.
- f REDMEN ON PARADE—A color film dealing with the annual get-together of our Indians in New Mexico. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f RESPECT THE LAW (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—A good film of the "Crime Does Not Pay" series. The picture depicts the dire consequences of carelessness on the part of the private individual who disregards the law for selfish purposes. In this case a plague is let loose on a community by the unwillingness of a dock owner to have his piers rid of rats and who corrupts an inspector to pass his premises as sound to save the difference in money. Very well done. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f RODEO GOES TO TOWN, THE (Sports Review)—Horses and steers destined to perform in the Rodeo well filmed at their training and at their final showing in Madison Square Garden. 20th Century-Fox.
- f SACRED GANGES, THE (Fascinating Journey)—A beautifully photographed travelogue along the Ganges River. Paramount.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 1—Glimpses of famous old actors taken from their early films. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 2—Picture personalities at the naming of the new mayor of Studio City. Columbia.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 3—Hollywood folk at horse shows and ball games. Columbia.
- f SEA FOR YOURSELF (Pete Smith Specialty)—Erratic hobbies of swimmers on and under the sea. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SHARK HUNTING (Hollywood Novelty)—Howard Hill shows his excellent style hunting sharks with bow and arrow. Vitaphone.
- f SOJOURN IN HAVANA (Columbia Tour)—A film of the sights to be seen in the lovely capitol of Cuba. Columbia.
- f SPOTLIGHT ON INDO-CHINA (Magic Carpet)—A trip with Lowell Thomas through this colorful land of southeast Asia. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj TRAINING POLICE HORSES (Adventures Newscameraman)—An instructional short on the training and duties of the horses used by the New York Police Force. 20th Century-Fox.
- f UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT, THE (Washington Parade)—A very good presentation of the work and play of the cadets. Columbia.
- f UNUSUAL CRAFTS (Cinescope)—The arts and crafts of the inhabitants of the Scilly Islands off the southwest coast of England. Columbia.
- Musicals, Novelties and Serials:**
- f ALICE IN MOVIELAND (Broadway Brevity)—The winner of a beauty contest sets out for Hollywood for a career in the movies. Vitaphone.
- fj BREEZY LITTLE BEARS (Paragraphic) A delightful film of three bear cubs on a voyage of discovery in a temporarily vacant farm house. Paramount.
- f COMMUNITY SING NO. 4—5th Series—The Song Spinners give a delightful concert of popular music. Columbia.
- f DOG IN THE ORCHARD (Broadway Brevity) A grim story of a farmer who murdered his wife in order to marry another woman living nearby. The dead woman's dog leads the sheriff to suspect foul play and the victim is found buried in the orchard. Vitaphone.
- f HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH—A well made film about a man who has fallen into such severe poverty in spite of his eagerness to work that he travels halfway across the country and persuades his brother-in-law to give him a job hauling nitro-glycerin. It is by no means a gay picture but its poignancy is enormously effective. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f HENRY BUSSE AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Melody Master)—A band with a fine brass section plays a group of modern tunes. Vitaphone.
- f LOVE'S INTRIGUE—An amusing comedy taken from the files of the early movies starring Billy Bevan. Vitaphone.
- fj RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY (serial) NO. 3—The Plunge of Peril—An ambush in which the villains come off second best but rally sufficiently to attack a wagon train and place the hero in great danger. Universal.
- f SKINNAY ENNIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Melody Master)—A delightful program of mixed popular music. Vitaphone.
- fj SKY RAIDERS (Serial) NOS. 1-2-3.—Donald Wood, Billy Halop, Robert Armstrong. Original screen story by Eliot Gibbon. Directed by Forde Beebe. This is a better than average serial dealing with a miracle plane constructed for the National Defense. The plane and all characters involved undergo the vicissitudes peculiar to all serials but with more logic and attention to detail than can be said for most serials.
- Cartoons and Comedies:**
- f ALI, THE GIANT KILLER (Sport Reel)—A very funny film of a wrestling match. Col.
- fj BEDTIME FOR SNIFFLES (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A mouse tries most heroically to stay awake till Santa Claus arrives. Vitaphone.
- fj GENTLEMEN'S GENTLEMAN (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Wherein Pluto has difficulty adhering to the best standards as valet to his master, Mickey Mouse. RKO-Radio.
- fj GOLDEN EGGS (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Donald Duck is in fine form trying to cope with the inmates of the chicken-yard. RKO-Radio.
- fj MISSISSIPPI SWING (Terrytoon Cartoon)—All work is stopped on the plantation because the Show Boat has come to town. And a clever show it is, complete with vaudeville acts, singers and dancers. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj MOUSE TRAPPERS (cartoon)—The story of the vain struggle of a W. C. Fields panda to capture a mouse. Very amusing. Universal.
- fj MRS. LADYBUG (Technicolor Cartoon)—The legend of the Ladybug and her children with a hungry spider to liven things up. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj* PLUTO'S PLAYMATES (Walt Disney Cartoon)—An unusually original and bright cartoon introducing as Pluto's playmates an octopus and an especially beguiling seal. RKO Radio.
- fj PORKY'S HIRED HAND (Looney Tune Cartoon)—Porky employs an inefficient pig to guard his chicken coop against a very efficient fox. Vitaphone.
- fj PROBLEM. PAPPY (Popeye Cartoon)—Apparently Popeye is just a chip off the old block for his father is an incurable flagpole-sitter, despite his years. All of which causes Popeye considerable trouble. Paramount.
- fj RAGGEDY ANN AND RAGGEDY ANDY (Technicolor cartoon)—A good color cartoon telling the story of the making and naming of two rag dolls whom a little girl wanted to part because she only could pay for one. Paramount.
- fj SNOW MAN, THE (Terrytoon Cartoon)—A snow man has fun playing on the ice with three little rabbits. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj SOUR PUSS, THE (Looney Tune Cartoon)—The trials of a pig and a somewhat stupid cat on the first day of the fishing season. Vitaphone.
- fj TEMPERAMENTAL LION (Terrytoon Cartoon)—The life of a lion of spirit newly harbored in a zoo and what he does about it. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj WACKY WILDLIFE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—Featuring the denizens of wood and stream in unexpected attitudes towards life. Vitaphone.
- m WAITING FOR BABY (Benchley Comedy)—This being a plea for more sympathy toward the expectant father. Robert Benchley enacts the leading role most feelingly as well as narrating in his best style. Paramount.
- fj WESTERN DAZE (Madcap Model)—This short, in Technicolor, employs puppets acting on cleverly constructed sets to tell a Western fable, and all set to music by Andre Kostelanetz. Para.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Charles Coburn, Barbara Stanwyck and Henry Fonda in "The Lady Eve"

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

- f* CHEERS FOR MISS BISHOP—Martha Scott, William Gragan. Based on the novel "Miss Bishop" by Bess Streeter Aldrich. Directed by Tay Garnett. In line with the recent books about country this and country that, *Cheers for Miss Bishop* proposes to tell of the career of an English instructress in a midwestern college from her under-graduate days through to her retirement from the college faculty. Since comparison with last year's faculty biography is inevitable, it must be stated quite bluntly that this is not a female, Americanized equal of *Mr. Chips*. Martha Scott ages well and tries hard to achieve the high quality of Robert Donat's performance but the script-writers have failed to introduce the needed spark of vitality into the film. It remains static in spite of fine costuming, documentation and its moving sentiment. United Artists.
- m* FLIGHT FROM DESTINY — Thomas Mitchell, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Warner. (See Exceptional Photoplays Department page 20)
- f* FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK—Errol Flynn, Brenda Marshall. Based on the play by Lazlo Fodor, Bernard Merivale and Jeffrey Dell. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Errol Flynn as an active and charming amateur sleuth who writes detective stories on the side, gets mixed up with a gang of diamond smugglers and a burlesque queen when he sets aside the police opinion that an attempted client of his banking house is a suicide and goes on the trail of the murderers. The double life he finds it necessary for himself to lead as a socialite and a thrill-seeking author is the basis of good comedy sequences and the kind of dash Mr. Flynn affects fits in nicely with this plot. The usual game is made of the official police, their dunderheadedness and clumsiness, but there are so many new turns and surprises in the film as to rank it fairly high for this kind of movie. The supporting cast, including Brenda Marshall as the suspicious wife and Ralph Bellamy as the mysterious dentist, is excellent. Warner.
- f* LADY EVE, THE—(See Exceptional Photoplays Department page 19)
- f* MEET JOHN DOE—Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold, James Gleason—Screenplay by Robert Riskin. Directed by Frank Capra. To save her job on a newspaper Ann Mitchell creates "John Doe," an average American who threatens to jump off the city hall roof as a protest against the injustices that make the struggle for existence in the country almost impossible. The stunt creates such a furor that John Doe has to be found, and John Willoughby, a down and out ex-ball player is chosen by the editor and the young woman to play the part until Christmas Eve when he is to disappear. A radio speech composed of platitudes preaching the basic American ideals of good neighborliness and mutual understanding clinches the mounting popularity of John Doe and Clubs spring up throughout the States proclaiming the ideals of the new idol. The totalitarian-minded publisher of the paper sees the possibilities of the movement to bring him into national control and backs it up with his wealth. His plan is to use the unsuspecting John Doe to solidify national sentiment and then to propose him over a nation-wide hook-up for the presidency. John finds out the scheme before the speech and the war is on to save the country, leading to a grand climax. Cooper is magnificent in the title role; the rest of the cast turn in first-class performances. Typical excellent scene shows James Gleason, the hard-boiled editor in his cups, explaining why he goes soft when he hears the national anthem. The material is dramatic dynamite, but is handled with consummate skill and taste by Frank Capra and his writers making a fine picture, imaginative, rich in detail, fast in pace, and saved by clever use of dialogue and situation from falling into mawkish aspects of either sentiment or patriotism. Warner.
- m* RAGE IN HEAVEN—Robert Montgomery, Ingrid Bergman. Based on the novel by James Hilton. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. Here is another study in brutality wherein Robert Montgomery proves his worth, showing the insane efforts of a congenial paranoiac to materialize his delusions of persecution in the world about him by setting all his human contacts against him artfully and then escaping them completely by committing suicide in such a way as to frame his childhood hero as his murderer. Montgomery hints at the savage

(Continued on page 21)

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The Future of Motion Picture Councils

IT is exactly twenty-five years—a quarter of a century and a longish time in the short life of the motion picture as an American institution — since the National Board of Review conceived the idea and began putting it into execution of organizing local groups around the country which were called Better Film Councils, Better Film Clubs, Motion Picture Study Clubs, or similar names with the same purpose implied in them. The National Board had been engaged in reviewing pictures and supplying, for anyone who was interested, advance information about them. This information, based on the Board's belief that in selection, emphasizing the best, and not in censorship, lay the best hope for the development of the motion picture in our recreation and culture, consisted of recommendations of films, recommendations made by the large and representative group of reviewers, and classifications of films according to their audience appeal—in short, compiling a weekly list of the coming pictures most likely to be enjoyed by the average public, with an indication of which section of the public—adult, family, or juvenile—would enjoy them most.

Back in 1916 it had become apparent that the Board's services and purposes could be better used and advanced by groups than by individuals, and representatives of recreational, cultural, educational, religious and civic bodies began organizing in various towns and cities to pool their interests in the motion picture, and particularly to promote attendance and appreciation of the best pic-

tures as picture-making went on its rapid way of progress and improvement. The Board's Annual Conference grew out of these groups coming together in New York to exchange opinions and plans. Many of the pages of this number of our Magazine tell what some of these Councils are now doing, and hope to do.

There has been a good deal of variation in the extent of the aims of different councils. Some councils have already achieved what they set out to do and have become less active than they used to be, because their program of activity was limited and has not been expanded with the passing of time. Others, old ones and new ones, are striding along vigorously. Efficiency and enthusiasm are accomplishing a lot in bringing about cooperation between audiences and picture producers and exhibitors so that legitimate public wishes can be met. But more could be done, not (Heaven forbid) by organizing into a minority pressure group, but by becoming an articulate expression of nationwide public opinion.

Legislators say that it is a tough job to get laws concerning the motion picture passed — any laws, whether restrictive or liberalizing—because though there are always plenty of small, active, hard-pushing bodies fighting for what they personally want, there is no dependable wide-spread public-opinion expressing itself as a guide to what the majority of people want done. The box-office and public patronage influence the making of pictures as much as it ever should be influ-

enced from the outside. But some folks aren't satisfied with this. What about federal and state control, censorship—all such things as that which are continually cropping up? Isn't the public that pays its way into the theatres interested in such matters? Gallup polls and other polls may reflect something about what people think, but they reflect it passively. Can't there be something active that expresses a great majority attitude toward how the

screen is to be allowed to function?

Find out what bills are introduced into Congress or state legislatures about motion pictures. Find out what they mean and what they lead to. Are you indifferent to such things? Isn't there something that can be done about indifference, and about the bills, either for or against them, instead of letting them slip into the laws just because so few people care?

Community Motion Picture Activities

IN this issue we present a picture of community motion picture activities as reported at the last annual Conference of the National Board. The delegates represented Motion Picture Councils and like groups in many cities and towns throughout the country. Although the program of these organizations is the same in general principle, its application in communities may show interesting differences, as indicated by the reports of those who took part in the community activities session.

The session was conducted in the form of a year book, with each one contributing as an officer or chairman on a special phase of work. This and the matter of time put a limit on what might have been reported by each representative, but the brief parts or chapters are of value as a cross-section view of the work.

The leader was Mrs. Lewis P. Addoms, president of the Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn (N. Y.), and a member of the Board's National Advisory Council. The speakers and what they had to say in this informal meeting are as follows:

Reporting for Washington

MRS. FRANK A. LINZEL, President
District of Columbia Motion Picture
Council

I represent a rather young Council. Some four years ago the motion picture became a matter of community interest and we gathered together the leading organizations that you are familiar with, and formed the

Council. Our problem may be a little different from others in the field. I would like to sketch briefly what we have done in this past year. We have felt that we have done a great deal in the question of establishing discrimination.

We wanted to make available to our members the things that the government was doing. We knew that here we had all of this work right on our doorstep and we felt that we should take advantage of it. The government was highly cooperative. We held meetings from month to month in certain of the departments, familiarizing ourselves with the extensive work that is being done in the way of documentary films. This is true of the Department of Agriculture, the Public Health Service and elsewhere.

Out of that came some very interesting things. The members of our organization, the representatives, went back to their organizations and in many cases stimulated legislation that was not at all connected with motion pictures but with the subjects they saw presented there. That certainly is a new area. They were imbued with the idea of what their organizations could do to accomplish the things that the government was trying to show in these pictures. I am speaking here particularly of legislation that tends toward the control of virulent diseases and that sort of thing.

Then, too, we have had some extremely interesting cooperation from the exhibitors and producers. As I went over the list I found that every single one had done some-

thing for us. An example of such cooperation was our ability to secure a speaker from a school in Washington called the Washington Studios of Animation. We felt that here was a grand new field for the youngsters coming up who are finding it so hard to orient themselves and to obtain something to do in a field that isn't overcrowded. We went to the vocational high schools and said "We are going to put on these things. Will you send the boys and the girls, particularly those taking drawing?" They did so. The exhibitors let us have a theatre and some of them gave us the cartoons, the illustrations. The man from the school talked to the children and you haven't any idea how that stimulated them.

All of this seems a long way from the purpose for which the Council was started. Yet we feel that it is doing something to establish this new trend, and these new areas of motion picture interest. It takes me back to what was said not more than a year ago; that it is no longer a motion picture problem, it is a question of a motion picture program in a community. I have not touched at all on the things that all of us do but have tried to tell you just briefly some things that we feel perhaps we can do, because our situation is a little bit different in Washington from what it is in other cities.

Special Activities

MRS. RICHARD M. MCCLURE

**President, Better Films Council of
Chicagoland**

A great many years ago, when I was a little girl, it was quite the fashion for women to do their own laundry work. My mother, it seemed to me, led all of our neighbors when she hung her clothes on the line. On one particular day when she was hanging up her things, I noticed that she hung all of her sheets on one part of the line, all of her pillow cases carefully on another; all of my father's blue shirts together, all of his white shirts together. I said to her "Oh, mama, how pretty your clothes look on the

line." And she said this to me, which I have remembered all these years—I can see her now as she looked down at me—"I want you always to remember that you can tell the kind of a housekeeper a woman is by the way she hangs her clothes on the line."

And so it is that you can judge organizations by the way they hang their clothes on the line. And what are their clothes. The special activities in which they engage and the projects which they sponsor. For it is those things about an organization that sell that organization to the public, the community, and the world at large. It is for that reason that these special activities are important to each one of us in our various organizations.

But it seems to me that one of the most vital things which we, each one of us as heads of organizations, should ask ourselves is, where these special activities fit into our programs.

It seems to me that first of all we should determine that these special activities and projects should have a definite part in the program, that they should develop the theme and the objectives for which we are organized, not simply be hung on as a part of the program to entertain, to add variety or space to the program. They should be carefully planned to supplement certain steps of the way, to expand certain ideas which shall become a definite part of a program.

So I should like to mention a few of the special activities in which the Chicago Council has engaged in the last two years. You, each of you, have done these same things in your particular Councils, and inasmuch as each of the representatives who shall follow me with chapters in the book will enlarge upon them, I shall only mention them to you and then, if any of you are interested, I shall be very glad to tell you what we did to develop them.

At our earliest meeting of the year, since our chairmen are the first clothes which we hang on the line for the world to see and their understanding of a program either makes or mars the year's work, it seemed advisable for us to prepare a very special exhibit, a display of materials, sources of

help and information so that the new chairmen could find the tools to make them effective in their particular work. May I say here that it is important that chairmen should first ascertain and become familiar with the ordinances which govern the showing of motion pictures in the particular community in which they are located.

One of the most valuable things which we have done in our area since we are far from the source of supply either in Hollywood or New York City and since speakers are particularly difficult to find who are informed upon motion picture subjects, has been to establish a speakers bureau, listing all of the available speakers, their subject matter, their fees, and we have made that available to our member groups.

We have also listed and compiled for distribution lists of recommended non-theatrical films, as we are always being asked for recommended films suitable for club, school and church programs. It is not easy to find films to recommend. You can find films but they are not always suitable after you see them.

Inasmuch as we are being given more and more radio time, we have learned that it is important for us to have on file radio material, lists of suitable subject matter which may be covered over the air. Everybody can find matter about stars, but to find source material, valuable educational material is not always easy. So over a number of years we have been compiling this for radio.

We found that our city libraries, because of shortage of funds, had very few books on motion picture subjects. So we have, during the last five years, purchased and established for distribution all of the fine source books on motion pictures. These are made available to all of our membership, checked out and in as any public library would do.

Often school libraries and even public libraries are very glad to have trade magazines and film guide subscriptions but they cannot buy these, and so it is that we sponsor and earn money to give a series of these subscriptions to our libraries. There is also a great need of stills for use in our schools and libraries for cooperative work. So, we

have collected and are building a large library of stills which may be used by them.

One of the most successful projects sponsored was a book-made-into-a-film exhibit, which was established in one of the neighborhood theatres and created there so much discussion that a number of our other theatres borrowed it. It was put together by one of our large libraries and probably will become a yearly event in that theatre.

We believe that it is very important for us to recognize special "weeks" like Education Week, Book Week, Drama Week, Music Week, and to create exhibits pertaining to those weeks, for the simple reason that the majority of people think of motion pictures only in relation to going to the movies. Our program, our objective is to awaken the community to the place which motion pictures play in national community life.

One of the things which we are exceptionally proud of and which we have carried to a very fine fulfillment for two years, is sponsoring a visual education clinic to which we invite the representatives of all the state universities and colleges in the 8 midwestern states. It has been a most successful conference and we will carry it on again this year. We have conducted a city-wide survey of visual education to ascertain how many of our schools are really making use of the outstanding visual aids department maintained by our city public schools.

A new project this year in our Council is to stimulate the use of films in our church and religious education programs. We are having a most interesting and rather surprising reaction to that program of introducing into a Motion Picture Council a religious education division for church and film cooperation.

We have been called upon during these last two years to prepare in advance selected programs for junior shows. In order to do so we have had to take the year's output of films to find out what it would cost a manager to put on a series of pictures. We have used that as a guide toward building a complete and well balanced program which we have made available to our component groups.

We are compiling and distributing film es-

timates, of course, as a regular service to our groups, maintaining our previewing committees at each of the Loop theatres. We are assisting always in planning benefits for various groups. That, I think, is one service which many of you have not realized is a service you may render. As an illustration of that, one of the Boy Scout groups in our area sponsored a benefit of "*They Drive by Night*." The various churches condemned the group sponsoring the film because it did not seem to live up to its advance recommendations. Had they cleared with us they would have been saved a great deal of embarrassment. Not that the film was not good, but the question was whether it was such a film as a Boy Scout troop might sponsor.

Another service which we have called a special activity is the arranging and compiling of guest lists for shows for shut-ins. You all have done that. But have you ever tried such a show as a story teller illustrating her story with stills and victrola records? It makes a charming and delightful program for shut-ins. Have you ever canvassed your city for blind people and invited them to a motion picture show? It is a rather unusual experience and one that you will enjoy.

You all sponsor camera clubs and motion picture appreciation groups, but how many of you are standing behind a program of community appreciation, offering to your young people some sort of recognition for the slides which they may make from their most beautiful camera shots, and preparing a lecture to go with them for use throughout the schools and clubs in your area?

So we could go on with these special activities! Each of these suggestions that I have made is very simple and they are the things that you do. But what seems important for us to remember is to select the things that develop the type of program which gives our organization a standing in the community. In other words, to dignify this organization of better films, better understanding of the various phases of motion picture production, distribution and exhibition. We are the clearing house for motion picture information. These are the special activities in which we engage.

Public Relations

MRS. ARTHUR D. KERWIN, President

Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council

IT is a pleasure to be here this morning and to tell you briefly how the Public Relations chairmanship functions in our organization.

It was through the efforts of our Public Relations Committee that we were instrumental in putting into Wayne University, under the direction of Professor Scott, a motion picture appreciation class. This year, through the Public Relations Committee we are inaugurating cinema clubs in the public schools. We have through this Committee put visual education in our parochial schools.

It is impossible, in contact with the theatre managers and the distributors, to have everyone running to them. It causes much confusion. Therefore, the time has come when the movement for cooperation between local theatre managers and the organized social-minded forces in the community interested in the showing of good films is making intelligent headway. In our Council we have 75 organizations representing about 100,000 persons. Their representatives come to our meetings and report back to the respective groups. The Public Relations Chairman and I as an ex-officio member of that committee, make the contacts and ask for a preview. If the picture is worth publicizing we send out through these representatives, the information to "patronize that picture, talk about that picture." In this way we help the theatre manager, we help the producer.

This year a particular piece of constructive work is being done through our Zoning Committee. We are planning to have special Saturday afternoon matinees for children in neighborhood theatres. These neighborhood theatre managers when we contact them tell us their problems, and are very anxious to cooperate with us.

We feel that we are doing a worthwhile piece of work and if it were not for our Public Relations Committee we could not accomplish the things that we are planning to do for this coming year.

Theatre Contact**MRS. W. G. KERR****Motion Picture Chairman, Allegheny Co.,
(Pa.) Federation of Women's Clubs**

THE Allegheny County setup in Pennsylvania is very much the same as in other states. We find that the communities surrounding Pittsburgh do not have many theatres, therefore there is no problem. They tell us that their manager is a member of their church, or his wife is a member of the Women's Club—and that they have no problems as are found in a larger community with many theatres.

In the city we urge our members to contact the theatre managers before they get a problem, so that they will not have any difficulty when active measures may seem to be needed in the theatre. We stress parent responsibility in the sponsoring of junior matinees, and the question of balanced programs. We like them to boycott the picture if it is not suitable for the young people. We also urge our members to become acquainted with their neighborhood managers since such things as advertising of films and starting evening shows so that the beginning and not the middle of a picture comes at the most general time of attendance, can often be settled by this contact—also questions of discipline at the Saturday shows.

Our press list is in the Friday evening paper. We have a very fine Publicity Chairman and parents in general have that information. The members of our organization come to our meetings and we present there a list of recommended pictures and ask them to go to their theatre manager and recommend these pictures for the children. This combines work for our young people and the contacting of our theatre managers.

Film Study**MRS. RICHARD K. JONES, JR.****President, Cleveland Cinema Club**

THE aim of the Cinema Club like all progressive Film Councils is to teach motion picture discrimination so as to choose films more wisely and evaluate them more understandingly.

With this end in view, our programs are set up not only to entertain but also to arouse constructive criticisms of film work. Two meetings are held each month, one a business meeting, the other a study meeting open to the public. Regarding the latter, it is my privilege to speak.

During the past years, the study meetings have been divided into two parts; the first devoted to comments and reviews by members and the second part dealing with such subjects as the showing of amateur films; the place music plays in motion pictures; technicalities of production, such as lighting and sound; talks on Hollywood by press men; censorship of films in the state of Ohio; discussion of directors; study and showing of documentary films; symposium on double features; demonstration of commercial use of films; explanation by accredited authorities on film legislation; and reviews of the ten best pictures of the year by members. Once a year during Book Week, a book review is given of some outstanding film. This film is then discussed from a technical standpoint and compared with the book from which the screen play has been taken.

After each study meeting, having recessed for lunch, a Round Table Discussion class takes place. During this period an intimate discussion on all subjects of vital interest in the study of motion picture appreciation is carried on by members. Picked films are the main subjects. Directors and their special technique, and local problems of the industry are also studied.

In the spring of each year a Motion Picture Festival is held to which all organizations interested in better films are invited. Nationally known speakers bring a wider field of vision to those attending the conferences. Panel discussions on such subjects as "What is the Real Influence of Motion Pictures on our Youth" are carried on by teachers, professors, students, press women, city hospital superintendents, members of police department, etc.

This Festival concludes with a youth program similar to that held at the National Board of Review Conference. We have Junior Cinema Clubs in Junior and Senior High Schools. Some of these are held

after school hours and others are part of the school curriculum. They follow the same plan of study as that of the Senior Cinema Club, their sponsor. The Junior Advisor visits these groups regularly furnishing speakers, study materials, securing invitations to previews at studios and giving advice when requested.

As part of its public educational policy, five times a year a Bulletin, compiled by the review committee, is issued and sent upon request to schools, clubs and individuals. This bulletin contains a pithy editorial, recommends new books and magazines dealing with films enumerates and evaluates outstanding current pictures as to their specific type. This committee also publishes each fall a list of motion pictures adaptable to the noon movie hour in school. Copies are sent to principals in Cleveland and outlying suburbs.

The Cinema Club of Cleveland submits this general plan of educational program to all progressive film groups. Membership participation is the success of any good club meeting. To this end, we advise a continuous study of the motion picture and an active constructive expression of that study by all members.

Radio

MRS. LEONARD ROGERS,

Columbus (Ohio) Motion Picture Council

SEVERAL years ago, in fact it was 1932 when I was a student at Ohio State University, Mrs. Bryan, Chairman of the Better Films Council of Columbus and Franklin County, asked us to help out a little with some programs we were going to put on the radio. We had a 15-minute period every Wednesday afternoon all during the year. We put on short plays with the assistance of some of the other students in the Drama Department at the University. They seemed to be very successful as we received a lot of favorable comment on them. The students met once a week and just a half hour or so before the program would have a brief rehearsal and then put the program on the air.

We also gave the motion picture reviews of the week and suggested lists for children as well as adults. Frequently, we would have a short radio discussion regarding some particular phase of the motion picture.

At present we are not on the air, but we hope to be very soon.

I have been asked to add a word about some welfare work we are undertaking through our Council. It is a project of presenting a series of movies to the Settlement Houses, through the cooperation of the various clubs in the city. We go to these clubs and ask them if they would like to contribute \$3 for an evening's entertainment for one of the Settlement Houses. With that money we can secure a film, we have regular portable equipment and we can present these film shows to between two and three hundred children, naturally, they are all underprivileged children. In some of the communities in addition to contributing the \$3 to the movie plan, light refreshments are furnished making a party out of it. The settlement children are very much enthused over it and we feel the plan is meeting with success.

Membership

MR. ALVIN A. GRESENS, President,
Rochester (N. Y.) Film Council

I have been asked to tell you about men in our organization. Our Council does not limit its membership to women. We cordially invite men of varied occupations to join with us.

In our 10 years of existence we have had 3 male Presidents. One was the principal in a grammar school in the city. Another a teacher in one of the large high schools. Still another is a social worker connected with the Children's Court of the City of Rochester. We also have theatre men, business and professional men, and college students on the Council.

We are very glad to have these people in our organization because it gives us different ideas, a more balanced organization and a more representative field in which to spread our work.

Junior Programs

MRS. SETH TALCOTT,
Executive Committee,
Schools Motion Picture Committee,
New York City

THE Schools Motion Picture Committee has two main functions. One is the recommendation of suitable good programs for young people over the week-end. The other is the fostering of educational films for use in the classroom.

I think, perhaps, where we differ slightly in our program is that we try to recommend an entire program for children. That means we try to see that the main feature is not spoiled for the child by a poor short or a bad trailer preview of attractions to come.

I think I can illustrate that by telling of something that happened a few weeks ago. About 13 theatres in a chain were showing *Boom Town*, and with it one of the "Crime Does Not Pay" series called *Women in Hiding*, which had to do with unmarried mothers and the racketeers who prey on them—obviously not movie fare for a 12-year-old. We called this to the attention of another chain and they, through many changes in their circuit, substituted another short, so that in the following weeks we were able to include their theatres showing this feature in our list of recommended programs.

You might be interested to know that when we first started, about five or seven years ago, there were only four theatres that would cooperate with us. Now there are over 350.

Our lists appear in the New York Herald-Tribune, Times, and Evening Post every Thursday, in Cue Magazine and in various other publications, including school bulletins such as the Horace Mann Bulletin.

Our other activity, that of fostering the use of educational films comes about because we are the Schools Motion Picture Committee. We are supported by private and public schools. It is to the parents and faculty groups of these schools that we furnish information, not only about the entertainment films, but the documentary or educational films in many fields of education.

This information, together with reviews of new or outstanding documentary films, is

published semi-annually in our bulletin which is edited by our faculty group. We also serve as an informal exchange bureau of information, because where a film has been used in the classroom we have the teacher's comments as to whether it has lived up to expectation or has fallen short of it, and where it can best be used.

We also try to give to our members, the schools, a preview of some outstanding film that would illustrate the progress of motion pictures in the field of education and teaching.

Ways and Means

MRS. MARY I. BAKER
Review Committee Chairman,
Jacksonville (Fla.) Motion Picture
Council

THE subject that I have this morning no doubt presents a problem to all of us. A number of years ago when our Council inaugurated the junior matinee, it was a very profitable venture for us. It was the only theatre that had a 10-cent admission price for children. Our cut was 50 per cent of the profits, which was a very nice revenue. Then there came the time when other shows put on a 10-cent admission. Sound films came in and they were very much more expensive than the silent pictures, so our margin of profit dropped. The greater part of our audience today is composed of underprivileged children from homes and organizations in Jacksonville, and our work in the junior matinee has become more or less altruistic.

Each member of our Council pays \$1 for the National Board of Review Magazine, which we consider essential to a knowledge of the work. In addition to that, we have annual dues of \$1. So much for our monetary ways and means.

I do want to mention the interest of our group in visual education. A speaker at a recent meeting was Commander Maxwell W. Wells, Lieutenant-Commander, who has charge of visual education and radio at the United States Naval Air Station in Jacksonville. As you all know, that is to be one of the largest air bases in the country. Because it was pertinent to the times, and

I think it might be new to you, I wanted to quote to you just a few lines from some of the things that he said.

He started his talk by saying that the Navy is a school and maintains sound motion picture technician schools in New York, San Diego and Kavita, in the Philippines.

He went on to say that most persons have formed some idea of the Naval Service as a result of knowledge obtained while watching and listening to a motion picture and to say that motion pictures play an important part in maintaining the highest state of morale in our Navy. "Soundmotion pictures are a part of every man's recreation aboard ship and they provide pleasing entertainment which at the same time is educational." He said that among the buildings at our Naval Air Station at Jacksonville there is to be an auditorium "which will be equipped for motion pictures. The building will seat about 850 men and will not be open to the public to compete with local picture shows."

He also called attention to the importance of visual aids in signalling with flags, and the use of slides and still pictures, as well as motion pictures in teaching the men. "Our purpose will be to give them the most instruction in the time allotted so as to make the graduates more immediately useful to the Naval Air Service."

Educational Activities

MRS. CHARLES W. SWIFT,
President, Elmira (N. Y.) Motion
Picture Council

LAST spring our Elmira Motion Picture Council celebrated its fifth anniversary with a luncheon. As guest speaker we had our Superintendent of Schools. In his talk he said that the greatest task facing American educators is not merely to teach children history, geography or civics on an intellectual basis, but to make them emotionally conscious of the value of American ideals and culture. The motion picture is one of the most powerful media through which this can be accomplished, he continued, because it appeals to the heart as well as to the intellect. Then, urging that Americanism be sold to American children, he warned

however that films should not depict depraved instances in our American life but rather emphasize the lofty, the spiritual and cultural aspects of the nation.

We have the backing of our Superintendent of Schools in trying to get photoplay appreciation started in our English classes. It is not easy to get the older teachers to try something new. You perhaps have all experienced that difficulty. We were fortunate in one of our high schools in having a new professor come two years ago, a young man full of enthusiasm. He offered to write out a unit if the English teachers would all use it so that they would have something uniform. That has worked out very well and we have photoplay appreciation started in our older high school as well as our junior-senior high school, which has more of the younger teachers.

Cinema Clubs which have been established in both high schools, have done a great deal to help along this work. The older high school has its Cinema Club at a quarter of eight in the morning. You must know that children who are interested enough to get up and be at high school at quarter of eight in the morning are willing to work. They have an adviser from the English Department and they do a great many things. The membership is limited and they have quite rigid requirements in order to get into the Club. In that way they feel sure of getting students who are interested and are willing to do their part.

They have bulletin boards in the main hallway of the high school, with posters, stills, and all information needed for them to know about the pictures that are worth seeing. They preview pictures occasionally as a group and use that for discussion.

In the junior-senior high school there are two Cinema Clubs, one for freshmen and one for the upper classmen. As you know, upper classmen resent having freshmen in their groups, and so we have satisfactorily worked it out this way. These freshmen by the time they are seniors have had enough experience so that they are very valuable as leaders.

We have also formed study groups in many different parts of the city. The Girls' Hi-Y groups are always looking for something that the girls are interested in and

they are all interested in motion pictures, so they have formed study groups there. Also in YW work, there are several different classes of Business Girls who have formed study groups. They often have a speaker and they have created a great deal of interest. They have a bulletin board in the Y, and are kept posted on pictures worth seeing.

The school libraries as well as the city libraries have cooperated with us in having exhibits and books on all outstanding pictures. It is especially valuable in the high schools because they have a library of stills and study guides to refer to in their work.

Many teachers have reported that the interest in history has been stimulated through this work, as well as a great interest in reading better books.

I could tell you much more about the work that we have done, but I think this is perhaps touching those things that are most outstanding.

Library

MRS. WILLIAM ERATH,

Staten Island Better Film Council

I have worked with books the greater part of my life, books in every possible way, but I have never had the unique experience of being a living chapter in a book.

I am thankful for this opportunity, especially as the subject matter of the book is community activity. If there is one thing librarians in city branches do, it is to ally themselves very closely with the work of their communities.

When the Staten Island Better Film Council was organized in 1932 it was in the neighborhood in which my particular branch functions, the St. George Branch of the New York Public Library. I was invited to become a charter member of the Council. You can imagine how eagerly I embraced that opportunity for another community contact.

The early meetings of this Council were held in the District Attorney's office. We were very fortunate in having two men as members and Presidents of our Council in the beginning years. Judge Walsh invited us to use his office for our meetings.

In one of these early meetings I had the pleasure of hearing a talk on the organization and objectives of Better Film Councils. Then and there I decided that I would do my share in everything I could through the medium of books to help in this work of procuring for our young people the opportunity to study motion picture appreciation and to cultivate a discriminating taste.

The fine objectives of our Better Film Council to bring to Staten Island the best in motion pictures, and to work toward the development and education of an informed spectator group among the 5,000 high school students in our district, gave the library a splendid incentive to build up its collection of books on the art, the value and the effect of motion pictures on the life of today.

In addition to books we have developed a file of clippings, pamphlets, study guides, and stills of outstanding pictures. Through the efforts of our President, Mrs. Orton, and through the friendly cooperation of our local theatre managers, we have been receiving stills of outstanding motion pictures. We have not only displayed these but lent them to the high schools and to other interested agencies.

We have a special bulletin board on which are posted stills of current films showing in our local theatres and the Council's guide to films, "Talkie Time," which is constantly referred to.

Since 1932 the Council has held an open meeting each year at the Library with speakers of international reputation in the field of motion pictures. During 1940 the Council has held its Executive Board meetings and weekly editorial committee meeting at the library.

We have compiled a very fine catalog of film reviews. The Council subscribes to the National Board of Review Magazine, the D.A.R. and National Legion of Decency lists, and it knows what is happening in Hollywood through the weekly review of motion pictures in production. This material is turned over to the library for everyone's use. As has been said before, the library is not very rich these days and we are very grateful for this help from the Council in supplying this material.

In 1934 there were no study groups in

any of the Clubs in Staten Island high schools. That year the Council had Dr. Lewin of Newark as guest speaker and invited the heads of the English Departments to participate. As a direct result of this meeting we had formed two motion picture clubs and a junior preview group, which met with the leader in the library. That was done every Saturday morning until the schools recognized the importance of their objectives and took them in where they are now flourishing.

This phase of the work of the Council and the library is still active and progressive. That is shown by a recent request from Wagner College to share in the formation of motion picture study clubs there. This will bring new students into the library who will not only use the material, the books and the files, but who will bring to us new points of view and give new direction to our work.

Parent-Teacher

MRS. RALPH FORSYTH,

**Chairman, Rockville Center (N. Y.)
Better Films Committee**

OUT in suburban Rockville Center we have the full cooperation of the Parent-Teacher Association in our better film work.

In 1926, when our organization was formed, we did not have any success at all in getting together with the parent-teacher organization. It seems the superintendent then in office was not at all sympathetic with our group, at least he did not think the work should be brought into the parent-teacher work.

However, in a few years a new superintendent came along who was sympathetic and enthusiastic about the work. Immediately, standing committees from each of the four different schools and the high school and the Central Council were formed with Chairmen. Also the budget allotted money to each of these chairmen which provided them with the National Board of Review Magazine and paid their major expenses to the conference. So we always have a big delegation from Rockville Center.

No doubt these chairmen have a great influence on the parents. How much we

cannot exactly tell, but certainly at every meeting they make their announcements giving the audience suitability ratings of pictures, and recommend the picture or not according to its suitability for the children on Saturday afternoon. So there is reason to believe that they do create a great deal of influence in helping these parents, who in turn help their children to become discriminating moving picture attendants.

We feel that we do effective work, and the greatest part of it is through the P.-T.A. chairman.

Telephone and School Publicity

MRS. J. A. YARBROUGH

**Treasurer, Charlotte (N. C.) Motion
Picture Council**

I represent the President of our Motion Picture Council in Charlotte, North Carolina, who was expected to speak on this program.

One of our ways of informing the public is through a Telephone Committee in our Council which, as the name indicates, telephones about good pictures. The committee takes the names of many different people and telephones to them, after a picture has been previewed, telling them about it and suggesting they see it themselves, and also asking them to please advertise the picture among their contacts. The Telephone is one of the important parts of our organization and we feel that we have reached many people and advertised good pictures in that way.

We are very much on the alert about acquainting parents in various ways with the pictures that are especially good for children, ones we feel the children will be interested in that are not too mature for them. We have a great deal of publicity in our schools in the way of posters and announcements, as well as notices in the school papers. It so happens that our publicity director is the daughter of the Superintendent of our Public Schools, and that, perhaps, is a happy chance. However, we do not feel it is entirely due to this that we have the privilege of making our announcements, getting across to the children and to their families word of the good pictures.

Another feature that we are particularly proud of is that the children of the various institutions, orphanages and homes in Charlotte see certain pictures. They are taken to the theatres by members of the committee. We are very careful that they see the right pictures. These pictures are previewed and taken up with the managers of the different institutions before the children are carried there.

In our Council we have representatives who go to the different organizations, as the D.A.R., the P.-T. A., U. D. C., and Women's Club. They give a monthly forecast of exceptional pictures expected. They also report on exceptional pictures that have been shown since those pictures often come back.

The point that was brought out this morning by one of the speakers is that pictures should not be previewed according to one's own personal tastes. The Chairman of our Preview Committee has stressed that with us, not to write a report from the individual like or dislike of that particular picture, but to be fair and just in giving any picture the attention it deserves for acting, theme developed, direction and general presentation.

Another thing that I want to say in answer to something that was brought out this morning, is that we know our theatre men. Every other month we invite them to a dinner meeting. On those occasions we have a special program with a good speaker someone who is well informed about the motion picture and its different phases. The managers come to these meetings. They make it a point to be there and seldom miss. We feel very happy that we have a close contact with them and that they know we are trying to do constructive work all in a friendly way, that we are their friends and they can depend upon us to help them in anything we may do.

Our Council in Charlotte stands high in the esteem of the public. We are many, many times telephoned, "Shall I send my child to this picture?" "My daughter wants to give a motion picture party, will you suggest a picture? Is there something in town that is especially good for that, or shall we wait until next week?" We feel that we are rendering a service to the com-

munity and we have a fortunate place in the life of the community.

During the question and answer period following these reports Mrs. McClure of the Chicago Council said that she had been thinking of a sort of self-analysis for Councils. When Mrs. Addoms, the chairman, urged that she share these thoughts with the audience she did so in the form of questions. These might well serve as one of those popular scoring questionnaires with the Councils able to say yes to all rating themselves high. Anyway here are some of them certain to set us thinking.

EVERY now and then all of us would do well to re-evaluate our own importance and find out if we are really accomplishing the things we had anticipated we would at the beginning of the year, or at the beginning of our organization. There are many questions we can ask ourselves.

First of all, what is our standing in the community? Are we well known! Are we looked up to as an authority on our particular subject? Whom do we seek to serve? How is our work considered by other groups that are perhaps interested in motion pictures? Are conferences of other organizations attended to find out whether they, too, are engaged in the study of motion pictures? Have we made it a point to analyze the programs of other national organizations to find out what they are doing in motion pictures?

Are we duplicating in any way the program of other organizations in our community? Are we following the same line so that our strength added to the strength of others will help to accomplish a certain something which our particular community may need? Are we planning our program just for the day? Do we expect to follow through to see whether the component groups have done what we asked them to do? Do we seek to know whether they are using the material which comes to them? Have we ever thought how much it would aid the organizations sending material if we would sit down and tell them the exact usefulness or uselessness of it? This would help to get better, more effective material.

What survey have we ever made to find out whether or not we are reaching all of the organizations in the community with our

program? How many have thought to take a map of their town and plot on that map where the various chairmen live or, as in Chicago where we are composed of 350 different organizations, where the organizations are located, and thus find out the areas in the town which have not as yet been reached? Then do we see what could be done to broaden our program of usefulness in those particular sections of the community which seem as yet not aware of the fine service which we render?

One of the tendencies which I think all of us have is to institute many worthwhile things and then drop them. I mean by that we are going to carry out a survey, for example, to learn how much our schools are using visual education. We make the survey and then lay it away. Has that been of any value? Not at all. So, if we make such surveys let's put them at the disposal of those groups that are especially interested in visual education. There we come again to the School Committees and the particular necessity for the cooperation of the Parent-Teachers. It can be done. There can be a most harmonious relationship if we stick to the field for which we are organized. The rest will come.

How many make it a point to know the theatre man's problems? And to make those problems ones which we may help him solve? Do we approach our program making with an idea that we must know all there is to be known about the subject, so that we will be considered the authority outside of the industry? How else shall we establish ourselves as a really valuable asset to this motion picture business? Do we have at our finger tips all the material which is offered in making our programs effective in the study of this industry which touches our lives at every side?

The motion picture is a force that we cannot fail to recognize as of perhaps more importance even than the home, the church or the school in the moulding of character. Therefore, we should study the programs of other organizations as our work relates to them and becomes a clearing house of information that will really be a source offering valuable help and active participation in the community.

What Do You Want to Do About Motion Pictures in Your Community?

Discussed at New York Meeting

THE extent of interest in general motion picture subjects and in special showings at the Annual Conferences of the National Board is such that only a single session can be given to the consideration of community questions that are to-day problems of the delegates when they are at home. Because of this a regional get-together for all those near New York as a sort of follow-up to the November Conference was arranged for Monday, February 17th.

The group of 120 delegates met in the morning as guests of Warner Bros., with a Review Committee of the Board for a review and discussion of *Flight from Destiny*. In the afternoon they gathered at New York's Hotel Pennsylvania for an informal talk-it-over session.

In order to make this session helpful delegates had been asked to check the following questions and to add others indicating what they would like to have discussed. Perhaps these will serve to offer a few suggestions to any groups who wish to do a little self-searching.

1. What are you doing about motion pictures in your community, and what would you like to do that you have found no effective way of doing?
2. If you are working through a local Motion Picture Council—
 - (a) Who are the people you find most effective in such a Council? Who else might be advantageously used?
 - (b) What are the best elements in a Council program, and what others should be added?
 - (c) How can you get and keep an interested membership?
3. In the matter of cooperation with your local theatre—
 - (a) What relations do you have with the theatre management?

- (b) What measures do you take to make the public back up the efforts of a cooperative theatre manager? Do you make use of newspapers, schools, libraries and clubs, parents' associations, or what?
- (c) How successful are you in making the theatre manager realize through the box-office that cooperation with you helps him in his business?
4. Do you keep the National Council informed of your activities and ask for their help when you need it?
5. If you have no local Council are you interested in starting one?

Many of the points brought up for discussion by these questions could be answered only by an authority in the business of picture distribution and theatres. Mr. Herman M. Levy, Executive Secretary, of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Connecticut, was that authority. In response to our request he has put down part of the material he presented to the audience that day, so that it might be passed on to those of our readers who may be asking like questions in their own theatre contact.

"More Sinned Against"

By HERMAN M. LEVY

Executive Secretary, Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Connecticut

THE moving picture theatre exhibitor has always been the butt of greatest abuse in the industry. He has been blamed for everything from tough turkeys given away at Thanksgiving to Dorothy Lamour's sarongs. He has accepted his position as scapegoat with good grace. It has been exceedingly difficult for him to convince people in general that his problems are legion, some of them beyond his control and many insoluble. His patrons, whose help he needs, seldom lend that degree of understanding and co-operation that can be of assistance to him in his community relationships. He is accused, by both the public and producers, of being a chronic complainer who goes to California or to Florida each year on his losses!

In the hope of explaining somewhat the exhibitor's point of view and of pointing out how patrons, individually and in groups, can help, this article is being written. Let it not be said when it is finished that it has served to confuse further an already sufficiently confused situation.

It is difficult to generalize. Conclusions have to be varied in the same degree that local and regional differences re-

quire qualifications. For example, could it be expected of an exhibitor that he switch to a policy of single features or eliminate china night when every other theatre in the town indulges in double features and "giveaways" and when those are practices that theatre-goers in that town want? He has little opportunity to be an experimentalist—competition is too keen. The immutable laws of economics and of self-preservation make certain demands of him which he must comply with if he wishes his business to exist as a successful unit. As a matter of fact, it is this keen competition and rivalry, rather than legislative ukase, which has been and will be responsible for the tremendous growth and advance of the industry both in its production and exhibition branches. Please remember, too, that no producer ever deliberately sets out to make a "bad" picture.

Complaint is made that the exhibitor encourages the so-called "bad" pictures and smothers the "good ones." This is unfair criticism. First of all, he has nothing to do with the production end of the business. That is Hollywood's responsibility, and for Hollywood it must be said

that it will send forth only those pictures that you, as patrons, wish to see. Its only barometer is what you go to see. What other test may be used? "Why", asks a patron, "can't there be more pictures like *Disraeli*?" The answer is simple: people will not go to see that type in sufficient numbers to make its production less than a colossal financial failure. As a matter of interest the following statistics* are offered to show that "popular selection of films is not always of uniformly high social value."

PICTURES RECEIVING LARGE NUMBERS OF CANCELLATIONS OR REJECTIONS

Name of Picture	Number of theatres cancelling or rejecting
<i>Music for Madame</i> (Nino Martini)	5,873
<i>Quality Street</i> (Sir James M. Barrie)	4,837
<i>Hitting a New High</i> (Lily Pons)	4,662
<i>The Great Garrick</i> (Life of English Actor)	3,389
<i>April Romance</i> (Life of Franz Schubert)	3,871
<i>The Saint of New York</i> (Mystery story)	3,756
<i>Winterset</i> (Pulitzer Prize)	3,259
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (Shakespeare)	2,971
<i>Great Expectations</i> (Dickens)	2,730
<i>Under Your Spell</i> (Lawrence Tibbett)	2,135
<i>The Good Fairy</i> (Romantic Comedy)	1,897
<i>New Faces of 1937</i> (Musical)	1,562
<i>The Green Pastures</i> (Pulitzer Prize)	1,506
<i>Crime and Punishment</i> (Dostoevsky)	1,506
<i>That Girl from Paris</i> (Lily Pons)	1,472

PICTURES RECEIVING FEWER THAN 20 CANCELLATIONS OR REJECTIONS

<i>Lady Be Careful</i> (based on stage play "Sailor Beware")
<i>The Last Gangster</i> (Al Capone)
<i>The Big City</i> (Taxi Warfare)
<i>Desire</i> (Marlene Dietrich-Gary Cooper)
<i>Alcatraz</i> (Prison story)
<i>I Am the Law</i> (Edw. G. Robinson)
<i>They Gave Him a Gun</i> (War Story)
<i>Saratoga</i> (Jean Harlow)
<i>Her Jungle Love</i> (Dorothy Lamour—South Seas)
<i>The Bad Man of Brimstone</i> (Wallace Beery)
<i>Angels with Dirty Faces</i> (James Cagney)
<i>A Slight Case of Murder</i> (Edw. G. Robinson)
<i>Little Tough Guys</i> (Dead End Kids type)
<i>Dracula</i> (Produced 1931, reissued 1938)
<i>Frankenstein</i> (the same)

The last two pictures were shown in one season largely on double bills and played to some 4,400 reissue contracts with no cancellations.

A theatre that has three changes a week and runs double features (so many of them fit into this classification) has very little op-

portunity at selection since it has to use almost all of the pictures produced by the major companies in order to have available the large number of over 300 pictures required by it in a year. Now, since the entering of the Consent Decree, the exhibitor's life is even more complicated. The Decree provides no privilege of cancellation except for moral, racial or religious causes. The number of pictures fitting into those groups is negligible. It is true, that under the Decree, the exhibitor will not have to buy more than 5 pictures at a time instead of approximately 50, and that, on paper anyway, he will not be forced to buy another group of 5 in order to get the group of 5 he wants, and it is also true that all pictures will hereafter have to be "tradeshown." But what use will it be to him to be able to see the pictures if he has to buy the entire group that he sees or none at all, or if he has to buy them all because his three-changes-a-week policy requires it? There is this one possible advantage, albeit very small indeed; he will be able, after seeing the pictures, to book them with more intelligence and more in keeping with his community's desires. It may very well be, too, that local groups may be able to assist the exhibitor in this task. Keep in mind, that prior to the Consent Decree the exhibitor was forced to buy approximately 50 pictures from each of the major distributors whose products he needed, all in advance and usually knowing no more about the pictures before they were shown in his theatre than the audience that came to see them.

It is said that the double feature should be eliminated. But is that what the public wants? The pulse of the industry answers that query in the negative. It is hard to believe that the exhibitor would adhere to the policy of double features if that were not what his patrons desired. His answer must be that the vast majority of his theatre-goers want the double-feature. All that he can suggest is that those who do not like it should come to the theatre for only the one picture they wish to see. Quite interestingly enough, experience shows that patrons who are determined to sit through only one picture usually stay for the other as well.

* Benjamin Werne, "The Neely Anti-Block Booking and Blind Selling Bill—An Analysis," Contemporary Law Pamphlets, Series 6, No. 1, 1940.

If you feel that an exhibitor is playing a picture that is "bad" or that should not be shown, ask yourself if that is not being considered "bad" by you because of some personal prejudice or bias against that type of picture or against the star or for some other reason, and whether it is not so that most of the theatre's patrons did patronize the picture. Is not the conclusion as to whether a picture is "bad" or "good" a matter of individual taste and reaction rather than an opinion based on broad principles of virtue, morality and art?

In 1940, in the United States alone, the average weekly attendance at movie theatres has been estimated at 80,000,000. Normally, the weekly attendance in the rest of the world is 150,000,000, thus making a total of 230,000,000. It is obvious that pictures produced must cater to the majority.

"The fault, dear Brutus, is," to a very great degree, in the home. There and in schools is where missionary work must be done. If a change comes about in taste it will soon enough be reflected in the box-office and, by direct wave, to Hollywood. Your exhibitor does not want to show a picture that most of his patrons do not want to see. This is a statement from the record of the Senate Committee on the Neely Bill:

"Gentlemen of this Committee, it was much harder to sell theater men *Disraeli* and *Abraham Lincoln* than to sell Mae West. Don't let anybody tell you anything to the contrary. Every man in this business knows it. A few years ago, for example, George Arliss in *Disraeli* and Walter Huston in *Abraham Lincoln*—both grand pictures—drew more than their share of cancellations. The same year Mae West pictures broke all existing theater booking records up to that time, and even including today, because not one of her first two pictures was cancelled by an exhibitor in America. Those two Mae West pictures played more repeat engagements than any other picture in the history of the business."

It is thought by many good minds in the industry that the quality of pictures in general will be higher under the Consent Decree. This is based on the fact that since pictures will not be able to be released in blocks

larger than five, and since all exhibitors do not have to buy all pictures produced, competition in production will be even keener and the theatre-going public will be the third party beneficiary. It is much too early to prognosticate along these lines.

There are some ways and means that community groups and individuals, interested in what they consider to be the better pictures, can accomplish results. A few are suggested:

(1) "... be on the job constantly," as stated by President Wilbur of Stanford University, "to support the good and protest the inferior." Supporting the good is even more important because in that support you indirectly protest the inferior.

(2) Co-operate wholeheartedly with your local exhibitor at all times and try to understand his problems. He wants everybody satisfied, if that is possible. What he wants least is to incur the wrath of even a single patron.

(3) Exhibitors are always willing to co-operate with you as much as it is possible to, in time-of-the-week playing, in program arranging, etc. Just remember that there are certain limitations. In most instances, for example, your exhibitor is unable to play pictures until a certain number of days after they have played elsewhere; or the theatre may be a chain or affiliate that has little power to arrange its program because of home office planning.

(4) Make your community group a representative one, a cross-section of the theatre-going public in your locality. The more representative your group, the greater your bargaining power.

(5) Devote your time to education in the schools and at home. Get your family and your friends to see things your way.

In closing, may I quote from Dr. Erwin Panofsky, art authority at Princeton University:

"If all lyrical poets, painters and sculptors were forced by law to stop writing poetry or producing art, a rather small fraction of the general public would become aware of the fact, and a still smaller fraction would seriously regret it. But if the same thing would happen with the movies, there would be the most gruesome of revolutions within a week."

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, ARTHUR BEACH

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FRANK WARD

The Lady Eve

Screenplay, derived from Monckton Hoffe, by Preston Sturges, directed by Preston Sturges, photographed by Victor Milner. Produced and distributed by Paramount.

The Cast

Jean	Barbara Stanwyck
Charles	Henry Fonda
"Colonel" Harrington	Charles Coburn
Mr. Pike	Eugene Pallette
Mugsy	William Demarest
Sir Alfred McGlennon Keith	Eric Blore
Gerald	Melville Cooper
Mrs. Pike	Janet Beecher
Chef	Luis Alberni

THOUGH any first-rate director has so much to say about the script of a picture he makes that he could rightfully claim part authorship of it, so many people have a finger in screen stories these days that it is news when a man both writes and directs his own film. Preston Sturges sky-rocketed into Broadway fame some years ago with "Strictly Dishonorable" on the stage; in the last year he has soared to an even higher fame in Hollywood by following the example of Chaplin and the early Griffith, and embodying the writer-director combination in his own person. The striking part of it, of course, is that he has turned out three sizable hits in quick succession, and that they all have an individuality which makes them definitely Preston Sturges products and which someone will pretty soon be calling the Sturges "touch."

Strictly speaking, the story of *The Lady Eve* isn't something that Sturges wrote all brand new for himself—it goes back to something by Monckton Hoffe or even farther, but Sturges has trimmed it and re-fashioned

it to his own style. There's a fairly old idea back of it: a lady card-sharp sets out to fleece a gullible young millionaire and in the process falls in love with him. The taste of a cocktail, however, isn't so much in its basic ingredients as in the proportions and finesse with which they are shaken together. *The Lady Eve* has the fantastic, the high comic, the satiric, the farcical and out-and-out slapstick all mixed up in it, and the result can't be labelled anything else but a laugh-show. The whole theme, with all its variations of keys, is played to one end, to get laughs, and at several different levels it gets them.

Mr. Sturges seems to be a dashing kind of worker — he dashes things off without much apparent care for polish and inner harmony. He goes at it hit or miss, and luckily —whether through accident or great talent— it turns out mostly hit. He hasn't yet reached the level of Lubitsch or René Clair or Capra at their best, but when he does it will be in a spot all his own. His gusto sweeps merrily over the pitfalls he creates for himself, and over-doing is probably a better thing than under-doing.

In his first two pictures Sturges—through craftiness or budget limitations — worked without big and expensive names in his cast, so that all the glory of success came to his direction. Here he has stars who figure potently in the marquee lights, but his directing hand is as apparent as ever—none of them are quite what they have been before. Barbara Stanwyck is Barbara Stanwyck with a bit of difference, and though Henry Fonda is more Henry Fonda than ever, even that is something fresh. Such old-timers as

Charles Coburn and Eugene Pallette and Eric Blore are used with the kind of restraint that provides just enough of their best and not too much.

Mr. Sturges seems bent on trying many kinds of things. Perhaps he has some drama or tragedy or social significance tucked away in the back of his head. But it will be a pity if he lets his versatility keep him from doing a lot more laugh-provokers. He hasn't too many rivals in this field.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Critical Comment

A Crime and a Punishment

TO evaluate *Flight from Destiny* properly will require a separate heading entitled "deportment" or "attitude," and in this category the picture will receive a good big "A." As pictures go, this one is a fluke, being a mixture of rather ordinary movie plot machination with some academic food for thought drawn straight from a college classroom, shooting far above what most producers consider the average movie-goer's intellectual capacity. It has heretofore been the habit to consider such mind-stuff as box-office poison; its being in a picture was a deliberate biting of the hand which feeds the films, but *Flight from Destiny* caters to a mature audience which might enjoy a little tussle with abstract values and like to see philosophical syllogisms worked out on paper, or, in this case, on celluloid. And for this added value we are praising the film and its makers.

It's rather a pity that the two spheres of action are of unequal value. First we have a college professor confecting a tidy murder which he believed to be justified and then being unable to convince the authorities of his guilt. In spite of its humor and suspense, this phase of the film is pretty theatrical. In the parallel sphere of action, which takes place in the professor's mind solely, we have some juggling of immortality, good and evil in their most abstract sense. He postulates a little theory and then attempts to prove it in real life, only to have its fallacies pointed out to him most crushingly. This sort of treatment is new cinema fare and comes off quite successfully.

That the script-writer dared to inject philosophy into a film is highly commendable; that the producer backed him up is surprising; that it makes for a good movie is happy tribute to Thomas Mitchell's acting. Few are the men who could take such a character, a traditional excuse for a shabby gag, and make of him a man of flesh and bones whose problems become very real to the audience.

Denicotinized

SUCH a phenomenally record-breaking run as the play *Tobacco Road* has been having up and down the country these last years—and is still having—must mean something. Whatever else it means, it proves a great and evidently abiding public curiosity in the people Erskine Caldwell put into his book that was the foundation of the play, and that curiosity will probably make a great many people eager to see the picture.

The picture, somehow, doesn't make very clear why the play has such a hold on audiences. Or does it? Is it only those elements which the picture had to leave out that draw folks into a theatre to see the play, and shock them with a frankness allowed to the stage but not permitted on the screen?

The picture is beautifully photographed and put together, but unless you bring a lot more sympathy to the characters than they evoke in themselves there isn't a great deal of substance to it. The plot is hardly more than an episode, in which an impoverished family is temporarily saved from going to the poor house, by an act of charity that is quite unlikely to be repeated when the next rent-day comes around. Somewhere there must be social and personal roots to these unfortunate people, reasons for their plight being what it is, and for stirring pity and indignation about it. But the picture doesn't indicate enough of what these may be to make much difference, not enough to save Jeeter Lester and his family and neighbors from seeming more grotesque than anything else. Some of the characters are just unbelievable in their clownishness or cloddishness, and the rest do little more than invite an easy laugh or tear. In cleaning away the dirt that the screen could not stand most of the native soil has been washed away as well.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

insanity very subtly while Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders make a striking contrast in the roles of the innocent victims. In all phases of its production, the picture is logical and absorbing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f* **STRAWBERRY BLONDE**—James Cagney, Olivia de Havilland, Rita Hayworth. Based on the play by James Hagan. Directed by Raoul Walsh. The fact that Mr. Cagney plays a lug does not prevent *The Strawberry Blonde* from being a pleasing bit of film nor Miss Hayworth from being an equally pleasing example of her type. It opens on a Sunday afternoon in New York at the turn of the century with Mr. Cagney, a correspondence-school dentist, savoring the immediate prospect of pulling the tooth of an old enemy; by means of a throw-back the film then goes on to the story that led up to said Sunday afternoon. The picture has all the tunes and sentiment of period pieces of this kind but thanks to Raoul Walsh, the director, they are so rigidly controlled that the most squeamish will almost have as much pleasure as those partial to a relaxed tearduct. And Cagney and the rest of the cast, the set men, photographer and music editor have done a tasteful, expert job in realizing Mr. Walsh's nice balance of atmosphere and story. Warners.

f* **THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING**—Merle Oberon, Melynn Douglas. Based on story by Donald Ogden Stewart. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. A sparkling domestic comedy in the sophisticated Lubitsch manner detailing a critical phase in the Park Avenue menage of a brisk and successful insurance executive and his bored attractive wife, when in a psychiatrist's waiting room whither she had gone to be cured of hiccups the lady meets a young pianist, slightly nutty who relieves her ennui—and her hiccups—by being ardent and arty. The film, expertly paced and scored, exploiting the drolleries of Melvyn Douglas and the brilliant farcing of Burgess Meredith, makes swell diversion of the foibles of psychiatry and surrealism. United Artists.

m* **TOBACCO ROAD**—Charley Grapewin, Marjorie Rambeau, Twentieth Century-Fox. (See Exceptional Photoplays Department page 20)

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

m **ADAM HAD FOUR SONS**—Ingrid Bergman, Warner Baxter, Susan Hayward. Based on the novel by Charles Bonner. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. A touching story of a girl's devotion to four boys for whom she had been hired as governess and of her unspoken devotion to their father. The plot is simple and not very new and no great tragedy is included in it, but the skill with which Miss Bergman makes it live, gives it poetry and warmth, takes it out of the class of the run-of-the-mill sentimental movies. Of the cast the most distinguished performance besides Miss Bergman's

was that of Susan Hayward, as poisonous a lass with an itch for indiscriminate romance as we've had since Betty Field played the bored young wife in *Of Mice and Men*. Helen Westley cavorted amusingly in a role we are used to finding her in, a tart and worldly old lady with a taste for gin and an appreciation for decent folk. The other actors did what they could with routine parts and made no great impression. Besides the charm and talents of Miss Bergman the picture has the advantage of fine sets, costumes and Gregory Ratoff's sharp and economic direction. Columbia.

f **ANDY HARDY'S PRIVATE SECRETARY**—Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Kathryn Grayson. Based on characters created by Aurania Rouverol. Directed by George B. Seitz. The Hardy family prepares to celebrate Andy's graduation from high school. Andy is pretty much in charge of everything and employs a talented young lady to be his secretary. Mickey Rooney plays the ups and downs of an adolescent with the art and vigor we have come to expect, and Kathryn Grayson, the secretary, is lovely. She possesses a beautiful and highly trained coloratura voice which she uses very effectively in two Italianate arias. Excellent production and cast. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f **BLONDIE GOES LATIN**—Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake, Tito Guizar. Original screen story by Quinn Martin. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. This one is pure Bumstead throughout but relieved by a new locale—a cruise boat sailing for South America, and some unsuspected talent in its stars—Blondie's singing and dancing abilities and Dagwood's talent on the drums. All this places it on the lists as wholesome entertainment, the best of the "Blondie" series. Columbia.

m **FREE AND EASY**—Robert Cummings, Ruth Hussey, Judith Anderson. Based on the play "The Truth Game" by Ivor Novello. Directed by George Sidney. A swell cast do a lot for this tale of charming British gentlemen, rich British ladies and a poor but beautiful American girl. Fortune hunting is defeated by love but in the finale wealth is added thereto. Stress is placed on the glamour of the upper set, beautiful settings and clothes and the art of the cast in reading quite bright lines extremely well. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj **GREAT MR. NOBODY, THE**—Eddie Albert, Joan Leslie. Original screen story by Harold Titus. Directed by Ben Stoloff. Eddie Albert, as Mr. Nobody, is just a tiny cog in a big machine trying just as hard as he can to become bigger. He wants adventure on the dream-cruise he intends to take some day, but he never gets there due to the bigness of his heart. He just can't avoid giving away everything he has to any poor unfortunate who comes his way. Fortunately for him, however, his girl, Miss Leslie, is of more practical turn and keeps his feet on the ground as much as she can. At the picture's close, however, his sundry problems have worked out pretty well.

The production is very modest and the situations might have been banal, save for the refreshing guilelessness of Eddie Albert and Joan Leslie's candid attractiveness. They are young and innocent and very pleasant to watch. Warner.

- f GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, THE — Bob Steele. Original screen story by Olin Cooper, Garrett Weston and Robert T. Shannon. Directed by Joseph Kane. The plot is built around the mysterious disappearance of a train carrying a gold shipment and the rivalry of two brothers, one a policeman, a guard on the train, and the other the man who engineered the robbery, for the affection of the heroine. The direction has a good pace, the cast is adequate and the robbery is neatly executed but of course it doesn't succeed. Republic.
- fj MELODY FOR THREE—Jean Hersholt, Fay Wray, Walter Woolf King. Original screen story by Lee Loeb and Walter Ferris. Directed by Erle C. Kenton. Dr. Christian forsakes his country practicing to aid the cause of musical America by re-uniting a maestro, his music-loving wife and their child-prodigy who were estranged through a misunderstanding. Realizing the value of good music, well played, to create a sympathy for the characters and augment the inherent dramatic interest, this continuation of the Dr. Christian series gains in quality. It is especially wholesome fare for the family audience. RKO Radio.
- f MISSING TEN DAYS—Rex Harrison, Karen Verne. Based on the novel by Bruce Graeme. Directed by Tim Whelan. A good spy mystery about a young Britisher who loses his memory because of a bullet wound and becomes involved in a spy ring in Paris. Lots of suspense and word wit and excellent acting draw attention from an occasional lapse of logic in the plot. Harrison is unusually good. For those sensitive to that kind of thing, there'll be an emotional pull seeing the French working so hard on secret fortifications. (British Production) Columbia.
- f NICE GIRL?—Deanna Durbin, Robert Benchley, Franchot Tone. Original screen story by Phyllis Duganne. Directed by William A. Seiter. A nice little story that somehow got a trifle out of hand but was blessed by a melodious performance by Miss Durbin and the delightful didos of Robert Benchley as her papa. First love is the theme and Franchot Tone the glittering, tho' honest gentleman who stirs it up. Pretty sets, lots of good humor and a charming cast will make the film seem better than it is. Universal.
- f PENALTY, THE — Edward Arnold, Lionel Barrymore. Based on a play by Martin Berkeley. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. The gangster film is here carried into the second generation. Mr. Arnold is a competent plug-ugly who overlooks nothing in seeing that his son is properly educated to follow his own trade. As luck will have it, however, the son is sent on parole from a reform school to a farm and when the dramatic choice is to be made, the son chooses the farm to his father's more spectacular environment. If this sounds a little obvious, let it be added that Gene Reynolds, on whom the film relies for its impact as the son, sneers with the worst while holding the audience's sympathy throughout. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f REACHING FOR THE SUN—Joel McCrea, Ellen Drew, Eddie Bracken. Based on a story by Wessel Smitter. Directed by William A. Wellman. This is about a very unspectacular John Doe, played by Joel McCrea. He is a country boy who turns to the assembly line of a large automobile plant to pick up a little cash for an outboard motor. In the city, he also picks up a hash-slinger for a wife and they have a baby as well as some hard battles with the city's problems, but eventually return to his rural way of life. It is slow in keeping with the simple story, but full of quiet, honest humor and has some original touches to point up its development. Paramount.
- f ROAD TO ZANZIBAR—Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour. Based on the story by Don Hurtman and Sy Bartlett. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. Messers Crosby and Hope are led on a crack-pot safari-to-end-all-safaris in the dark continent to gratify the gold-digging propensities of the Misses Lamour and Une Merkel. The comedy may have a slight strain to it, but it is all in good fun and it carries a barb which is aimed in the right direction. It is still a pity that Miss Lamour takes herself so seriously when the others throw themselves so ingratiatingly into the antics at hand. Paramount.
- m SO ENDS OUR NIGHT—Frederic March, Margaret Sullavan, Francis Dee. Based on the novel "Flotsam" by Erich Maria Remarque. Directed by John Cromwell. Here is an epic of the refugees from Germany, tracing their plight of escape, attempted assimilation in a new country, eventual capture and deportation to another country, all for the lack of a paper, a passport. Despite some splendid performances, especially by Miss Sullavan and a new-comer, Glenn Ford, and a beautifully detailed production, the film sags badly from a super-abundance of melodramatics, scattered diffusely throughout its length. United Artists.
- f THAT NIGHT IN RIO—Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Carmen Miranda. Based on the play by Rudolph Lothar and Hans Alder. Directed by Irving Cummings. A lavish musical show set in Rio enveloping the plot of a rich South American baron with a beautiful American wife, an American actor who is the baron's double, and his sweetheart, a South American dancer, in a maze of flirtations all around. The supporting cast provides some nice comedy bits, but the stress of the film is placed on the singing and dancing and large musical ensembles. 20th Century-Fox.
- f TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN, THE—Laraine Day, Robert Young. Based on the play by

Bayard Veiller. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. The second filming of the career and trial of the girl who escaped from a reformatory and made good only to be faced with a murder charge. It's given an elaborate production and a good cast in this version and has its tense moments. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals

- f ACTOBATIC ACES (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—A visit to see tumblers in training, and later two troupes of professionals performing some marvelous feats. Ted Husing reads the commentary. Paramount.
- fj* ALIVE IN THE DEEP—An exceptionally well made film of life in the ocean including microscopic animals as well as whales and sea-lions. Among the more thrilling and unusual episodes is a fight to the death between a mother octopus and a moray eel who has designs of making a meal on her eggs. All told it is fine documentation of an unusual and interesting subject. Recommended for schools and libraries. Woodard Prods. Co.
- f ALLURING ALASKA (Fitzpatrick traveltalk)—A tour in color to Fairbanks and the rural districts of our great northwestern territory. Some of the scenic shots are quite lovely. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f* CABALLERO COLLEGE (Pathe Sportscope)—A beautiful and dignified presentation of the work of the Chilean cavalry college which is affiliated with the army. RKO Radio.
- f CANINE SKETCHES (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—This combines the suitability of dogs for artists' models with their skillfulness as hunters in a very clever way. The dogs are splendid specimens and uncanny in their routine of helping the bird-hunter. Paramount.
- f DELHI (Fascinating Journey)—This travelogue in technicolor concentrates on the lovely architecture of native Delhi and then shows its application to modern needs under the influence of the English. The older buildings are particularly well designed and graceful. Paramount.
- f FIGHT, FISH, FIGHT—Highlights in a deep sea fishing expedition in search of museum specimens. Vitaphone.
- f* FORBIDDEN PASSAGE (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—An expose of the methods used to smuggle aliens into the United States. Some of the scenes are rather grim and its all fairly exciting. One of the best of this series. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f FROM SINGAPORE TO HONG KONG (Columbia Tour)—An excellent travelogue through the chief centers of the British Empire in the Orient. Columbia.
- f GOING PLACES No. 87—"The Swankiest Isle in the World"—This covers the country and activities of the inhabitants of Mount Desert Island, Maine. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES No. 88—"Deserts of America"—A visit to deserts in Maine, Michigan, New Mexico and California. The photography is quite beautiful. Universal.
- f MARCH OF TIME, THE No. 7 (7th Series)—"Americans All!"—Generally, this is a well done chapter of the series, dealing with the immigrants who make up such a large part of our population. The earlier groups, already assimilated in various departments of our national structure, and the newer groups, with their eager desire for citizenship and occasionally with their loyalty to their former nationalities, are all shown as part of the America which is building for Defense. RKO Radio.
- f MEET THE FLEET—An entertaining and glamorous Technicolor study of the training of recruits in the United States Navy. A slight fictionalization of several characters is employed to point up personal interest in specific activities of the service and esprit de corp. Vitaphone.
- fj MEN AND SHIPS—A description of the training which is being given a large number of specially selected men from every state to prepare them for every type of service in our merchant marine. U. S. Maritime Commission.
- f NEW YORK PARADE No. 1—Manhattan Island well photographed, with emphasis placed on the desire for speed that seems to dwell in the hearts of its inhabitants. Columbia.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 4—This installment of the advances made in science covers modern raising of quail, new synthetic materials made in the chemistry laboratory and unique equipment found on the modern stratoliner. Paramount.
- fj POWER FOR DEFENSE—This film shows how the power from the immense TVA system is being used in the defense industries for manufacturing everything from flannel underwear and uniforms to airplane housings. National Defense Advisory Commission in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority.
- f QUIZ BIZ, WHAT'S YOUR I. Q. No. 4 (Pete Smith Specialty)—With his amusing patter helped out by movies, Mr. Smith asks questions of the audience allowing ten seconds for answers. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj RED, WHITE AND BLUE HAWAII (Paraphoric)—This picture stresses the size and importance of the sugar and pineapple industries in Hawaii as well as the size and importance of our military station there. Especially recommended for schools. Paramount.
- f SENTINALS OF THE CARIBBEAN (Magic Carpet Series)—A handsome survey of Puerto Rico and the defense work going on down there. 20th Century-Fox.
- f SPLITS, SPARES AND STRIKES (World of Sports)—Bowling as played by female champions. Columbia.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 87—A trip to various places to see unusual things such as a city of miniature churches built on a hillside near a Benedictine Abbey, a flaming natural fountain and other oddities. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 88—Hobbies of people who have achieved fame and in some cases fortune out of them. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 89—Things of interest to be seen in different parts of the country. There is a remarkable sequence showing the stunts of a highly trained dog. Universal.
- f TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT No. 3—Bob Hawk again asks the questions of people eager to improve their finances. Columbia.
- fj TVA—A highly informative picture of the giant system of dams being built in the entire region, showing the uses it has been put to in flood control, soil conservation, navigation, and in furnishing power for a great variety of purposes Tennessee Valley Authority with the cooperation of the National Defense Commission.
- f UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY, THE (Washington Parade)—A handsome and instructive tour through Annapolis showing the places, the routine and the middies themselves. Columbia.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 3—The third in the series of shorts picking up unique occupations and showing the people who are occupied at them. It certainly is not valuable information but it is interesting. Paramount.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 4—Covering sundry fields, from the making of imitation crown jewels to the fighting of bulls by women, this sequence is nevertheless entertaining and effectively handled. Paramount.
- f VILLAGE IN INDIA, A (Fascinating Journey)—technicolored visit to an argicultural village in India, stressing the influence of their religion and the evils of the caste system. Paramount.
- f WHISPERS (Passing Parade)—John Nesbitt demonstrates in this excellent film the damage done to individuals, industries, communities and nations by vicious whispered gossip. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials

- f MUSIC IN THE MORGAN MANNER—A good show including songs, dances and imitations bound together by a fine swing band. Universal.

(Continued on next page)

- fj **RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY** (Serial) Nos. 4-5-6-7-8-9-10. Dick Foran, Buck Jones. Original story by Oliver Drake. Directed by Ford Beebe and Ray Taylor. Containing more valiant efforts of the owners of the gold mine to continue mining and pay back the bank's note, despite the constant heckling of a gang of Western meanies. For a serial, this one is well photographed and not too illogical.
- fj **SKY RAIDERS** (Serial) Nos. 4-5-6-7-8-9 Donald Wood, Billy Halop, Robert Armstrong. Original screen story by Eliot Gibbon. Directed by Forde Beebe. This is a better than average serial dealing with a miracle plane constructed for the National Defense. The plane and all characters involved undergo the vicissitudes peculiar to all serials but with more sanity and attention to detail than can be said for most serials.
- f **TAKE THE AIR**—An amusing skit on the trials of a radio talent scout. Eddie Foy, Jr. supplies most of the fun. Vitaphone.
- Cartoons and Comedies**
- fj **ABDUL THE BULBUL-AMEER** (Color Cartoon)—The song of the heroic fight between the Russian and the Turk made into a delightful cartoon. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **BAGGAGE BUSTERS** (Walt Disney Cartoon)—The magician's hat brings forth a whole zoo of strange creatures to fret poor Goofy. RKO Radio.
- fj **THE CAT'S TALE** (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A mouse persuades his enemy the cat to give up chasing him, and further urges him to make a similar proposal to a bulldog in his own behalf. The results are not encouraging for the pussy. Vitaphone.
- fj **CRACKPOT QUAIL** (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A moronic hound is given the run-around by a plump and whimsical quail. Vitaphone.
- fj **OLIVE'S SWEEPSTAKE TICKET** (Popeye cartoon)—Popeye goes through protracted agonies in search of Olive's sweepstake ticket, only to find that it definitely was not a fortune-winner. Paramount.
- fj **PROSPECTING BEAR** (Rudolf Ising Cartoon)—On this gold-hunting expedition, there is a very appealing little mule who has an addiction for nibbling on dynamite which prevents the discovery of gold but makes for quite a funny cartoon. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **TWO FOR THE ZOO** (Fleisher "Gabby" Cartoon)—Chaos is universal when Gabby meets an exotically fictionalized member of the kangaroo family. Paramount.
- fj **WILD OYSTERS** (Animated Antics)—Mom and Pop, two puppet mice, have to contend with the villainy of a party of puppet oysters in their struggle to provide for themselves. Paramount.

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The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

- f* **DEVIL AND MISS JONES, THE** — Charles Coburn, Jean Arthur. Original screen story by Norman Krasna. Directed by Sam Wood. A kind of fairy tale with an effort towards social significance, involving a boy and a girl as the spearhead for an organizing group in a department store and an old tycoon who owns the store. He gets a job in his own place to spy out the radicals, but the young folks uncover his heart of gold and union and amity are at last established between employer and employee. Actually the film is hilariously funny and beautifully acted by the stars and the supports. Chief honors go to Coburn and Jean Arthur for some of the best work they have done. As comedy the piece is far and away above average. RKO Radio.
- m* **GREAT LIE, THE**—Bette Davis, George Brent, Mary Astor. Based on the novel by Polan Banks. Directed by Edmund Goulding. Miss Davis is herein given another highly dramatic role in a story which admirably suits her peculiar talents. The plot involves two women fighting for a man, Miss Davis employing the unethical stratagem of a lie to carry on the fight. Although the lie is uncovered, Miss Davis happily wins her man. The picture is very well handled, especially as to musical score, and will satisfy the already large Davis following although it may not add to it. Warners.
- f* **I WANTED WINGS** — Ray Milland, William Holden, Wayne Morris. Original screen story by Eleanor Griffin and Frank

Wead. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. This is the flying picture that the others have tried to be: planes, dives, crashes, heroes, death-scenes, sirens (both kinds), a heroine for the Air Corps to tussle over, bright lines, boyish clowning and all well photographed with the Army Air Corps flying fields as a background and using the simulated air attack of Los Angeles most effectively. Paramount.

- f* **MEN OF BOYS TOWN**—Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney. Original screen story by James Kevin McGuinness. Directed by Norman Taurog. This is further tribute to Father Flanagan and the worthy though difficult career he has made for himself in giving a home to countless uncared-for boys. In the course of its story, Father Flanagan reforms a fictitious State Reformatory whose methods of correction are a vicious contrast to Boys Town's splendid system. There are many scenes of tearful eloquence which testify to the ability of sympathy to get at and correct an otherwise maladjusted boy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- m* **THAT HAMILTON WOMAN**—Vivien Leigh, Laurence Olivier, Alan Mowbray. (See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 12.)

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

- f **GREAT SWINDLE, THE**—Jack Holt. Original screen story by Eric Taylor. Directed by Lewis D. Collins. An insurance investigator tracks down the criminals in an arson case that is none too subtle. Robust manly stuff with just a touch of romance to leaven the villainy. Columbia.
- f **KNOCKOUT**—Arthur Kennedy. Original screen story by Michael Fessier. Directed by William Clemens. The rise and fall of a Golden Boyish young fighter very well acted by Arthur Kennedy, but rather too slow a story to be very thrilling. The fight scenes are satisfying enough for those who like the harsher side of life. Warners.
- f **LADY FROM CHEYENNE, THE** — Loretta Young, Robert Preston. Based on a story by Jonathan Finn and Theresa Oaks. Directed by Frank Lloyd. The lady in this light western period-piece starts off as an unattractive school marm but ends as the pioneer for Women's Rights and the conqueror of that deep-dyed villain, Edward Arnold, and the winner of his right-hand man as mate. Sandwiched between this is a generous supply of good humor and gentle spoofing. The worst flaw is Miss Young's inability to be convincingly unattractive. Universal.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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BETTINA GUNCZY



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Movies for Defense

JUST as no means have been found for measuring accurately and incontrovertibly what effects movies have on children, isolating them from all the other influences that work on them in their daily lives at home, at school and at play, so there is no way of knowing how people of all ages, in all parts of the world, have been subtly molded by the motion pictures they have been seeing in the last twenty or thirty years. No movie so poor or humble that may not have told some people something they didn't know before, adding some bit to their experience. In those relaxed hours in the darkened movie theatre, giving up all their attention and emotion to the bright movement on the screen, everyone is open to some effect from what he sees.

In being called on to add their part to the present defense effort, so likely at some fatal turn of events to become a war effort, the movies are of course going to do what any public-spirited group will do—help all they can. What they do will be an extension of what they have always done, but with more conscious purpose and to meet more definitely prescribed ends. Of course there will be films made for purely technical uses, for training, instruction or what not—but unconsciously or deliberately the movies that are made for the more than ever important end of providing recreation may

take on the methods and effects of propaganda.

In these days people are more suspicious of propaganda than they used to be, and more on the defensive against it. The blatant and crude rabble-rousing that flourished so violently in some of the movies during the last war would be laughed off the screen now. Whatever attempts there are to make audiences more patriotism conscious—even more war conscious—will have to be more subtle, with more of an effect of being reasonable, without too much hurrah-boys and ostentatious flag-waving. Unless we lose our heads entirely.

But the most important basis for anything to aid defense is to know what we are defending as well as how to defend it. What the movies should be doing now, more than ever before, whether in serious or light films, is to keep in mind what there is in our national life that represents what we most prize in it, the ideals and ways we have been working out that make our country the dearest and most important country to us, the big and the small things we would fight to keep if they were threatened. They needn't be shouted about or argued about—but if the movies help keep them always in our consciousness that will keep us more alert about the need to defend them.

History in the Movies

By IRIS BARRY

Curator, The Museum of Modern Art Film Library

(Adapted from a lecture delivered before Film Library's and Columbia University's extension course in the History and Aesthetics of the Motion Picture.)

BEFORE I begin to describe my impressions of the "historical" film—on the whole adverse—I feel we should remind ourselves that the word "history" has two quite different meanings. It is used equally to refer to actual events as they really occurred, and to accounts given of those events by scholars who lived in a later period. In the same way, there are two kinds of historical films. There are films taken of events at the time they occur, such as the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and the bombing of Shanghai, both of which were photographed by news-reel cameramen and hence constitute actual records of historical events. A second group consists of *reconstructions* of past events, or even of present events. These reconstructions are obviously untrue to some extent. Frequently they set out to prove a contention, for example that Henry VIII was a good or a bad man, that his reformation of the church was right or wrong, that Henry himself was oversexed; they thus become not simply records of fact, and, in attempting to put across an idea, may sometimes pervert the truth of the events they purport to reconstruct.

To some extent, dramatic necessity dictates this frequent deviation from fact which we observe in historical films. To present *all* the facts about Henry VIII, it would be necessary to reconstruct and film every hour of his life, and that would be as undesirable as it is impractical. But beyond dramatic necessity, it is obviously impossible to reconstruct all the historical facts. Some of them are no longer known, or have been misrepresented, or would be unacceptable to the taste of our generation. It is therefore, for the maker of historical films, almost an irresistible temptation to slip from fact into make-believe or folk-lore. When Henry VIII is mentioned, most of us think of a

man who had a plurality of wives, just as Washington brings to mind a man who threw a dollar across a river, neither of which is an adequate historical conception of the persons in question. Actually, the facts which predominate in historical films are usually of very small historical importance, however picturesque; merely to depict such facts does not in any sense recreate history.

Until very recently, it was generally considered that history had been composed almost exclusively of uncommon persons—cardinals, statesmen, kings, emperors and a few geniuses. It is now the general feeling that this was a false attitude, that the great figures of history were created by circumstance, rather than that they were the creators of circumstance. The 19th century attitude to history (as being composed largely of great men) seems curious today, and almost as meaningless as the painting of Washington crossing the Delaware, which had nothing to do with the important things about Washington, or even the Delaware. A truly *historical* film about Washington or Henry VIII would dramatize not only their private lives and "historic" acts, but also the conditions which affected them and dictated their policies. Perhaps it would be even more honest to ignore Washington and Henry altogether and portray the lives of quite obscure figures of their periods. That this is never done is partly due to an archaic conception of history, but almost equally to the fact that the famous figures of the past create subtle and attractive roles for film stars to play.

Of all these factors which make the historical film so very unhistoric, the most important is this conception of history inherited from the nineteenth century. It has had a great influence on film-makers from the time of *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* (1895) and *Queen Elizabeth*

(1912) until now. The historical paintings, engravings, lithographs, and waxwork groups of the late nineteenth century generally depicted the history of the race in terms of "Important Events" involving famous people. The early admirers of the film were very anxious to make it serve cultural purposes, and what better purpose than to reproduce these waxwork groups *in motion*, just as they were supposed to look and act originally? The trouble was that the moving figures didn't look real, they seemed very nearly as "symbolic," rigid, and inhuman as did the wax figures they were copied after. Nevertheless, we were supposed to admire them and believe in them because the film-makers went to great pains—as they still do—to make every detail of costume and back-ground "archaeologically correct." But even this rather pedestrian accuracy defeated itself. Sarah Bernhardt's hairdress in *Queen Elizabeth* was no doubt absolutely correct in every detail, but she looked more like a matron of her own period than a queen of the 16th century. There is something in the way the hair lies down on the head which betrays the period. This has continued to be true in much later films; Marion Davies in *Little Old New York* looked much more like a Follies girl than a belle of old New York.

The 19th century conception of history as a series of world-shaking events brought about by ennobled effigies carried all before it until the war of 1914-18. After the war, as all of us remember, a period of "debunking" set in. Before 1914, Henry VIII would have been more or less a stuffed figure in films. After 1920, he was portrayed by both Emil Jannings and Charles Laughton as a man of crude appetites and obsessive leanings toward the opposite sex. While the latter portrayal impresses us as more humanly believable, there is little reason to think that it is more *accurate*: in both cases, what is presented is an interpretation of facts according to the taste of the period in which the films were produced. Also in both cases, the backgrounds and settings were more than a little grandiose, and the minor characters simply a lot of people in costume, looking uninteresting and with a

painful air of knowing that they were participating in some important event.

Now there is an exception to my personal opinion about historical films—that they don't ring true, are boring, and quite contradict everybody's experience of psychology and behavior. There *are* some which have a very convincing air. The significant thing is that all of these convincing, or more convincing, historical films refer to relatively recent events which occurred in the time of our grandfathers or great-grandfathers and which somebody could remember something about—a period which is in a sense alive, not exactly history, but part of the yesterday of our own time. Such events took place within the era of photographic documentation, so that film-makers do not have to depend upon folk-lore or make-believe, but can reconstruct the period through the recollections of people still living and through documentary records. In *The Life of Emile Zola* plenty of photographs, not only of Zola but of all the actual people who participated in his story, were reproduced in the picture and were easily recognizable there. Take another kind of film, *Cavalcade*. A good many people living today remember all the events that were portrayed in that film, and of course libraries and museums are full of documentation on the period. I, personally, thought Coward's material rather dishonestly handled for dramatic reasons, but there is a distinct difference between the spirit and flavor of a film such as *Cavalcade* or *Pasteur* or *The Life of Emile Zola* and the spirit of a film about happenings of long ago, such as *Queen Elizabeth* or *Anne Boleyn* or even *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. The "long ago" type of film is usually extremely elegant and quite bloodless. The film about events nearer to us in time is less elegant and more human, and people go on much more as we think people do.

One of the reasons why we find the elaborate films of long ago so unbelievable is that the screen has been helping to teach us what history really looked like when it happened, and not as painters conventionally recreated it. I said earlier that there are two types of historical film: the kind which reconstructs events and the kind which actu-

ally records them. The latter type is, of course, the newsreel, which has played an incalculable part in the education of our generation. We, all of us living now, have seen quite a little of real history on the screen. We have seen in the newsreels all kinds of potentates; we have seen Ghandi and the Duke of Windsor; we know Mussolini's face and manner as well as that of our best friend; we have had glimpses of the Hall of Mirrors and the signing of the Versailles Treaty therein; we know what war is like, even if we have never approached the firing line. It is pretty difficult to fool us about these things, and if any artist nowadays tried to paint the World War as Meissonier, the supposedly "photographic" artist, painted the Napoleonic Wars, we would laugh him out of court. The more original film-makers, of course, have seized upon the fact that movie audiences know what recent history looks like and exploited it to make their pictures more believable. When the Soviet director, Eisenstein, undertook to reconstruct the crucial events of the Bolshevik Revolution in *Ten Days That Shook The World*, he went outside the studio and used the actual locations of the Revolution, and as many of the people who participated in it as he could find. The result was that audiences all over the world exclaimed that the picture looked just like a newsreel taken of the actual events—which was exactly what Eisenstein wanted them to feel. It wasn't only that the film retold recent events which many people living remembered and had taken part in, or even that the director made his backgrounds and masses of people look as bleak and artless as they do in a real photograph. Eisenstein deliberately *constructed* his film like a highly intelligent, if heavily interpreted, newsreel, so that it was closer to the form of an historical chronicle than to fiction. The same impression was given even more abundantly by the battle scenes in *The Birth of a Nation*; they look impressively like the famous Brady photographs of the actual Civil War.

Films as close to the newsreels as these are rare, and most of them deal with times so recent as not to feel strange to us. There is only one historical film that I can think

of, dealing with older times, that has some air of conviction — the French film *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. There are many reasons for believing it was not a wholly good film technically, or not necessarily the right way to make any kind of film, even historical ones, but it was more convincing than most historical films are. Now Joan of Arc is just the sort of subject which directors usually feel must be treated with absolute accuracy of setting and costume. But instead of trying to represent the *trappings* of history, or bothering whether Joan had an accurate period locket hanging upon her bosom, Karl Dreyer presented people in vague, unidentifiable armor or plain robes. Since the people themselves were human and believable, it didn't matter what their costumes were. It is just the other way round in most historical films: they emphasize the accuracy of the costumes instead of the humanity of the people, and the worst of them actually stop the narrative to draw your attention to some particularly correct triumph of reproduction; as Gilbert Seldes points out, Gloria Swanson's *Madame Sans Gene* managed to work itself into complete immobility over Napoleon's actual snuff boxes. In *Joan of Arc*, on the other hand, one's emotions were touched and one was convinced, not that the picture was a reconstruction of events just as they had happened, but as they *might* have happened.

All the other films of the distant past seem to me to achieve nothing more than a dead and dusty grandeur. They have existed since the beginning of the film's history, these archaeological resurrections, full of ermine and velvet, actors in uncomfortable clothes which they obviously are not accustomed to wearing. With all their flourish toward surface accuracy, they are not half so interested in the reality of human events as in giving those events a bravura elegance. Louis XIV, for example, is always shown in fine attire, whereas in fact he seldom wore anything but a snuff-brown suit. The fact that film-makers will not let him wear one reveals their true interest, which is that of creating out of the half-understood materials of history another kind of fairy tale. Of this kind of film, Cecil B. DeMille, technically one of the most able

directors in America today, is the absolute master. In his films, accuracy, historicity, is never to be questioned. It is beside the point. The films are pageants in costume, full of action, founded on the values of melodrama. It is notable that when DeMille makes films of recent history, when he touches material still fresh in memory and supported by photographic documentation such as *The Plainsman*, the trappings and

costumes seem to vanish, his characters become real men and women, and the action becomes dramatic instead of merely picturesque. Aside from these portrayals of recent or contemporary history, his films and those of many others are not historical but "costume" pictures, offering pleasure perhaps but not information. As much as Walt Disney or *Alice in Wonderland*, they are fantasy.

An Important New Publication

AMONG the many fine things accomplished by the Works Projects Administration, the first volume of *The Film Index* compiled by the New York City WPA Writers Project and published by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library and the H. W. Wilson Company should particularly please people interested in motion pictures and take its place as the first part of a monumental work of reference. This book "The Film as Art" makes accessible for the first time the vast accumulation of information about films housed in the many libraries all over the country. It contains listings and digests of 8,600 books, periodical articles and film reviews, many of them culled from trade journals, interviews in fan magazines and the catalogues of forgotten companies, referring to 4,300 films and citing 4,200 actors, directors, scenarists and other film craftsmen. It covers 3,200 films giving full periodical reviews, basic production credits, information on the year and country of production and film descriptions or synopses. The Index from these brief points cited is easily seen to be much more than a bibliography. It offers at last a simple way to ascertain how many times a given novel or play has been adapted to the screen and by what company, to follow the work of directors, or to discover what the contemporary opinion was upon some film of historical importance. The digests adhere to the accepted bibliographical form, but the editors have further enriched them by the addition of critical commentaries. The information ranges from colorful details on personalities to abstruse arguments on aes-

thetics. You will find out that the poet Vachel Lindsay provided an early critical appreciation of the movies, that the actress Minnie Maddern Fiske was among the first to acclaim the art of Charlie Chaplin, that in 1923 Thomas Craven, the art critic, reviewed Nazimova's "Salome," that Joyce Kilmer wrote an obituary for John Bunny and that Jack London in 1915 regarded the movies as a prime means of universal education.

Until the publication of this fine compendium the enormous need and appetite for information on the cinema have been somewhat stunted. The haphazard career of the movies, beginning in the contempt of its early nickelodeon and wandering carnival days and growing amid the humbug and preposterousness of its development as a big business, has these latter years with its recognition as an art piqued the curiosity of thoughtful folk and brought about a demand for cinema literature, critical and historical, that has been supplied in none too satisfactory a fashion. Many good books have been published, excellent work has been done by film libraries in securing and perpetuating cinema masterpieces and curiosities, but until the appearance of *The Film Index* nothing substantially was accomplished in bringing together in one work the vast material that was scattered through histories, or to be found in obscure or extinct quarterlies or in short-lived magazines. Students, writers, researchers and historians who desire a systematic approach to the theory and practice of the art of the motion picture will have reason to be grateful for this sturdy work of scholarship.

Ten Years of Young Reviewers

CONGRATULATIONS are in order for the Young Reviewers who are now passing the ten-year mark in their corporate existence. To be sure, the group has changed as to personnel many times since its inception but the frame and the purposes have remained the same and it has become a respected and oft-publicized body of critics—one which is definitely not to be passed over lightly.

Their birth was brought on by the flood of pseudo-scientific investigations which were appearing in print to prove that movies were at the root of all juvenile delinquency and poor health in the youth of the nation. Many experiments were being conducted, many bodies rising up in protest against filmdom, and many parents were carefully harboring their offspring from this growing menace. But the Young Reviewers were able to consolidate an adequate amount of material to show that the movies are not injurious, that children are very critical of movies, having much the same taste as adults and are affected to about the same degree. Thus, the chief result of this decade of reviewing has been to vindicate the cinema. Movies are O.K. The children can take to them as heartily as any other group of persons and can accept as little or as much as their good taste allows.

Originally the Reviewers' ages covered the major span of childhood but it has since proved advisable to limit its membership to boys and girls of the older classes in the grade-schools, ranging in age from 8 to 14. These children, picked pretty much at random from the public and private schools and the settlement houses of New York, meet every ten days or so to see some picture—any picture—upon which their criticism might be of interest to other film-goers.

In the course of their experience, certain generalities have appeared though occasional exceptions accompany every such statement of trend. A film may have an unpredictable and perhaps harmful effect on a particular child. Or there may be some freak picture which will strike the children in an entirely unforeseen way. But in the average run of

criticisms offered by the children, an interesting light has been thrown upon their canons of judgement which apply to all the films they have seen or will see. For example, they dislike the mass of romance which is put into the films, due no doubt to their inability to realize the potency of the attraction between sexes. Love is an adult experience so it is natural for them to regard the continual embracing of the stars as ludicrous. They have also shown a disturbing lack of humor which traces to the fact that much of the wit of Hollywood is word-wit of a highly sophisticated sort, in spite of what the more severe critics may say. There are also adult situations which involve more knowledge of the vagaries of society than the children can be expected to possess. Such situations do not baffle or offend them or prey upon them however, but are simply forgotten. The movie is chalked down as a dull one.

On the other hand, the youngsters have shown of late a keen sense for eking out the propaganda in a picture, for finding the phoney haphazardness with which some films are made to move, for distinguishing between a ham actor and a truly sincere artist who identifies himself completely with the part he is playing. They are also very quick to pick out the technical flaws in a production, often more so than their learned parents.

Again, the children are eager to break down a picture, analyzing its motivation and calibrating the genuineness of its effects. Adults are prone to accept what is shown them uncritically when it comes to emotional situations but the children try to find out what made them laugh or cry and then determine whether their laughter was merited by the incident. Also the Reviewers have shown an eagerness to learn about a picture's make-up—to know what part the director contributed, who the bit players were, how much of the set was actual and how much confected from cardboard. This interest in films contrasts very favorably with the lazier interest manifested by maturer audiences.

To attend one of the Young Reviewer' meetings is an invigorating experience and

inspires a great faith in children to pick out the best for themselves as opposed to accepting the judgments of others. Often the films are seen by them in advance of national release so that they come without benefit of the critics' reviews or the advertisers' pressure, and here they estimate a film's worth definitely. Before the picture begins there is much wriggling and squirming and much whispering, but always about films. During the showing they give themselves over to it completely; the laughter comes easily and loud, the tears are shed willingly, unconstrainedly, burbles of exclamations will greet some daring feat of the hero's, while sharp words of warning will tell the heroine that she is being attacked from the rear by a band of wolves. This is the behavior we are all familiar with in the Saturday matinees where westerns throw the entire house into confusion. It is only after the picture has finished that the revelation appears which makes the Young Reviewers such an interesting

group. They immediately set to work on their ballots, never cheating or attempting to ask their neighbor the name of the director. Questions like "What is most worth remembering about the picture?" or "What does this film try to teach?" or "Who was the best actor?" are weighed with the utmost seriousness and the answers reveal considerable thought.

When the ballots are filled out, a leader is chosen from among the children who conducts a discussion which dips into every phase of the production. Straying from the picture to some more general problem or some meaty question is known to occur but the meeting is never out of hand. Discipline is maintained by the chairman with little effort and competition runs high as to who can offer the most and the best criticism. Arguments arise, differences of taste and upbringing appear and are battled over, faulty criticism is severely rebuked, and what emerges is a completely just evaluation of the film as it



Courtesy of March of Time, Inc.

Young Reviewers interviewing Mr. Maurice Lancaster of March of Time at recent meeting.

may affect any group of children of like age.

The Young Reviewers are casting invaluable light upon the goodness and badness of films and are by now an integral part of the work of the National Board of Review. In the future it is to be hoped that a general, nation-wide survey may be made, based on the experience gained from the Young Reviewers' meetings. In the meantime, may we thank our "critics in knee-pants" (which appellation they abhor) and congratulate them on their good ten-years' record. Their future appears bright and their career distinguished. May they continue to give and to derive as much pleasure and interest from their work as they have done to date.

New Membership of the Board

TWELVE persons have been appointed to National Advisory Council of the Board. All are outstanding in various fields of motion picture activity. They are: Mrs. Lewis P. Addoms, President, Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn; Dr. Campton Bell, Department of Speech, University of Denver, President, Denver Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Samuel B. Cuthbert, former Motion Picture Chairman, Allegheny County Federation of Women's Clubs, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Mrs. Clarence Echols, Director, Dallas Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Walter L. Gilbert, Cobleskill, N. Y. Motion Picture Chairman, Schoharie County Federation of Women's Clubs; Mrs. Arthur D. Kerwin, President, Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council; Dr. William Lewin, Chairman Motion Picture Committee, Department of Secondary Teachers, National Educational Association; Mrs. Frank A. Linzel, President Motion Picture Council of the District of Columbia; Mrs. Richard M. McClure, President of the Better Films Council of Chicagoland; Mrs. Charles W. Swift, President, Elmira, N. Y., Community Motion Picture Council; Mr. Harold M. Turney, Chairman Department of Drama, Los Angeles Junior College; Mr. W. W. Whittinghill, Director, Department of Visual and Radio Education, Detroit Board of Education.

The Board will profit from the closer affiliation thus effected and welcomes these representatives from many parts of the country.

Some Older Masterpieces

HOW to secure many of the older films of dramatic and educational value for showing to the new audience of young people and for reshowing to those who have enjoyed them in the past is often asked. A partial answer may be found in the proposed plan of the Inter-Museum Conference on Anthropological Films which has considered a compilation of all available ethnological and documentary films based on authenticity, dramatic appeal and curricular value, that would serve educational institutions and other organizations.

The fourteen films chosen by the Conference at its early 1941 meeting include those made by expeditions, commercial industries and firms, and by the major motion picture producers.

A majority of the films have been reviewed in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of this Magazine as they were released, for example—*Nanook of the North*, by Robert J. Flaherty—(Eskimo); *Time in the Sun*, by S. M. Eisenstein (edited by Marie Seton—Mexico); *Dark Rapture*, by Armand Denis (Central African natives); *Moana*, by Robert J. Flaherty—(Samoa); *Grass*, by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedack (Bakhtiari nomads of Persia); *Eskimo*, by Peter Freuchen and MGM—(Eskimos); *Silent Enemy*, by Douglas Burden—(Ojibway Indians); *Man of Aran*, by Robert J. Flaherty—(Aran Islands); *Taboo*, by F. W. Murnau and Robert J. Flaherty—(South Seas). The interest shown in them at that time indicates the probability of a hearty response to the proposal of making such films available for permanent use.

One member of the Conference group was Dr. Grace Fisher Ramsey, Associate Curator of Education, American Museum of Natural History, who is a member of the General Committee of the National Board. The Secretary of the Conference is Mr. Frederick R. Pleasants, Peabody Museum, Harvard University. In making this plan public the committee hopes that anyone interested in the program will offer suggestions as to the types of film, old and new, which can be used in the various categories of the listing.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, ARTHUR BEACH

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Pepe Le Moko

Screenplay by Henri Jeanson from a novel by D'Ashebe, directed by Julien Duvivier, photographed by Kruger, Marc Fossard and Robert Verkey, music by Vincent Scotto and Mohammed Yguerbuchen. Made in France, distributed in the U. S. with English titles by Arthur Mayer and Joseph Burstyn.

The Cast

<i>Pepe le Moko</i>	Jean Gabin
<i>Gaby</i>	Mireille Balin
<i>Carlos</i>	Gabriel Gabrio
<i>Slimane</i>	Lucas Gridoux
<i>L'Arbi</i>	Dalio
<i>Grandpere</i>	Saturnin Fabre
<i>Regis</i>	Charpin
<i>Ines</i>	Line Noro
<i>Pierrot</i>	Gilbert Gil
<i>Inspector</i>	Bergeron
<i>Frehel</i>	Tania

ANYONE who saw *Algiers* a couple of years or so ago would have a double reason for seeing *Pepe le Moko*—for itself, and for comparison. Walter Wanger made a copy of the French film (which has only recently come to the American screen)—a faithful and exact copy in many respects, and it was an excellent picture. But there were inevitable differences: the actors were different, and certain bits of emphasis in characters, situations, and so in the general effect. Deciding which is the better film is not easy, nor is it necessary. Almost everyone who has seen them both will like certain things better in one, certain other things in the other. The one thing that can be stated with certainty is that the French film is precisely what was intended and that the American film, besides being a translation and not the original, adapted the original intentions to American tastes and the American production code.

You remember *Algiers* if you saw it—it's one of the pictures one does remember. About the French thief, exiled by his crimes, who was safe so long as he stayed in the labyrinthine native quarter of the Algerian city where he had taken refuge from the home police. The plot was mainly a thief-hunt, with a native officer using psychological methods to catch his man, and eventually succeeding. It was colorful and exciting, lingering more than a bit on the romantic elements, and several actors in it stand out in the memory—Charles Boyer, Joseph Calleia, Gene Lockhart, Johnny Downs, and Hedy Lamarr—her first American appearance.

Pepe le Moko is a lot less romantic, much more real, and that is because Jean Gabin is Pepe instead of Charles Boyer with his big brown eyes, and Mireille Balin instead of the lingeringly photographed Lamarr is the girl. For this Pepe the girl is not from some other world but a girl from his old world of the Paris streets. That gives an entirely different tang to the whole thing, and people will like it better or not according to whether they prefer, say, *cafe noir* or coffee with sugar and cream. Not to speak of stronger potions.

There is not much difference in the other characters, but there is a difference in the direction. After all Julien Duvivier was working on his native heath and John Cromwell was not, in spite of the excellent model he followed painstakingly.

People whose interest in movies has a studious element in it will welcome the chance to compare *Pepe le Moko* with *Algiers*, each so excellent in its way, just as

they would be glad to compare the two versions of *Intermezzo* in which Ingrid Bergman appeared, the one made in Sweden and the one made in Hollywood. J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional.

That Hamilton Woman!

Original screenplay by Walter Reisch and R. C. Sherriff; produced and directed by Alexander Korda; released through United Artists.

The Cast

Emma, Lady Hamilton	Vivien Leigh
Lord Nelson	Laurence Olivier
Sir William Hamilton	Alan Mowbray
Mrs. Cadogan-Lyon	Sara Allgood
Lady Nelson	Gladys Cooper
Captain Hardy	Henry Wilcoxon
A Street Girl	Heather Angel
Reverend Nelson	Halliwel Hobbes
Lord Spencer	Gilbert Emery
Lord Keith	Miles Mander
Josiah	Ronald Sinclair
King of Naples	Luis Alberni
Queen of Naples	Norma Drury
Gavin	Olaf Hytten
Lady Spencer	Juliette Compton
Captain Troubridge	Guy Kingsford

IN this hour of Britain's agony, doubtless, comfort and inspiration must come to the English and to their friends in contemplating the glory of England's past, her traditional love of liberty, the dauntlessness and the heroism of the men and women who fashioned her empire and who preserved it in majesty and power; for such Alexander Korda in his latest film has unfurled a thrilling and glamorous part of the proud tapestry of British history, the story of Nelson. Of course, Mr. Korda, as someone remarked, portrays England putting her best foot forward (and a very good foot it is); all dross is burned away in the fire of his imagination and his patriotism, and there is left the gilded romance and the golden devotion to duty that none can deny the great and tragic admiral who swept Napoleon from the seas and gave his sight and limbs and life that England might be free. Thus the idea. Unfortunately, in *That Hamilton Woman!* the realization of it is no decisive victory.

A great deal is made of the parallel between Napoleon's threatened invasion of the

British Isles and the present Nazi determination to do the same thing. Nelson is presented as the clear headed patriot, whose warning goes blithely unheeded until it is almost too late, struggling against the appeasers of his time. There is a pointed scene of his exasperation at the fecklessness and frivolity of his allies who fete him for his victory on the Nile instead of preparing to consolidate that triumph. And another scene equally pointed when the British ministry conclude a peace with the Emperor of the French which Nelson condemns as a false and perilous peace that will last only so long as the enemy needs it to prepare the final assault. One cannot compromise with dictators, he contends before a politely bored cabinet, one must destroy them. Events prove that he is right—Bonaparte masses a fleet for the invasion. Nelson answers for England with Trafalgar, and his island home is safe for more than a hundred years.

There is no escaping the dramatic implications of the story of Nelson—particularly today; personally he was noble and generous; his life was haunted by loneliness and the drag of a nation's necessity. In Emma Hart, with her breath-taking loveliness, her spirit and her devotion to him, and so to his ideals, he found solace and strength. Thus we have, added to the great saga of victorious war, romance in the grand manner. Excellent movie material—all of it; but somehow Mr. Korda does not quite bring it off; for all its merits of direction, acting and production the final impression the film gives is very close to theatre and pasteboard.

It has no exceptional acting. Alan Mowbray reads his lines well and even wittily; he is thoroughly satisfactory as the aging, worldly dilettante who marries the winsome Emma for much the same reason he acquires antique sculpture. As Nelson, Laurence Olivier seems to walk through the film a good deal of the time; he can be halting and testy (as perhaps the original was), but for all his protestations it is difficult to believe he is in love. His great moment is his death, a scene smacking of historical paintings and a pieta, but quite beautifully fashioned and definitely affecting. In Miss Leigh's case it is difficult to comment on her performance; she is the light of the film,



Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier in "That Hamilton Woman"!

whether because of her talents as an actress or her beauty or both it is hard to say. She looks astonishingly like Lady Hamilton as Romney painted her. For whatever reason, however, she is more than satisfactory in the role in spite of being saddled with a great many stupid lines to read.

In short the virtue of the movie lies principally in its story idea, Vivien Leigh and the craftsmanship of the others in the cast. The writing is rarely better than fair and often worse. Compared with costume films of the past the lavishness of *That Hamilton Woman* often seems meager and tawdry, as in the fete in Naples and the battle of Trafalgar. It is an epic with a crippled rhythm and static episodes and characters individualized by great names rather than by personalities. But as a statement of a great nation's ideals expressed through its greatest hero, Mr. Korda's movie has its thrills and emotions. A.B.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Meet John Doe

Screenplay by Robert Riskin from a story by Richard Connell and Robert Presnell, directed by Frank Capra, photographed by George Barnes. Produced by Frank Capra, released by Warner Bros.

The Cast

John Willoughby (John Doe)	Gary Cooper
Ann Mitchell	Barbara Stanwyck
D. B. Norton	Edward Arnold
Connell	James Gleason
The "Colonel"	Walter Brennan
Mayor Lovett	Gene Lockhart
Bert	Regis Toomey
Mayor Hawkins	Harry Holman
Mrs. Mitchell	Spring Byington
Ted Sheldon	Rod La Rocque
"Sourpuss"	J. Farrell Macdonald

IT is Frank Capra's own doing that he has become the object of the most careful kind of critical scrutiny when he brings out a new picture. He has made himself one of the most enjoyable of directors by putting a lot of American life on the screen with affectionate warmth and

sympathy, and with a remarkable gift for discerning and expressing the humors and sentiments and crochets of American character. His highly individual style as a director is full of that not too common quality that we call good natured, and his expertness as a craftsman has put him in the top rank as a maker of American films. His success has been enormous, with both critics and audiences.

For some years now he has been concerning himself with something more than being merely entertaining. His social conscience has been more and more evident, leading him more and more to consideration of the lot of the ordinary, the "little," man, and questions of wealth and poverty and the workings of democracy. *The Lost Horizon* was his first approach to such matters, but laid in a far-off setting with more fantasy than fact in its set-up. Beginning with Mr. Deeds he took up a character that has remained practically unchanged ever since, involved in problems that have become a pattern—a pattern so little varied that it is getting almost too apparent. Mr. Deeds and Mr. Smith, and now Mr. Doe, are easily interchangeable, and whether they appear in the person of Gary Cooper or James Stewart they are always the same—a simple, honest young man, naive and innocent in worldly matters, suddenly forced by circumstances to confront some immense social-political problem, always coached by a wise-cracking disillusioned girl to whom he gives back her lost ideals and faith, and always, in the end, confounding the powers of darkness by his simplicity and honesty.

Meet John Doe follows this formula faithfully. The ingenious story that Richard Connell wrote called "The Life and Death of John Doe" provided a parable most pertinent to Frank Capra's feelings and philosophy—save for its ending. Starting with a faked letter to a newspaper column, announcing that a certain John Doe is going to kill himself on a certain date as a protest against the injustices of living, public interest is so aroused that the paper's editor has to admit he has been bamboozled or find a real John Doe to satisfy it. Mr. Deeds-Smith-Stewart-Cooper, a broken-down ball-

player temporarily being a tramp, gets the job of being John Doe. The gag becomes a circulation builder for the paper—John Doe becomes a public personage, preaching goodwill and neighborliness over the radio as the cure for all the world's ills. Backed by the tremendous publicity that money can get with modern methods, John Doe becomes a national figure—John Doe Clubs spring up everywhere. And the owner of the newspaper, who is a man with fascist ideas and ambitions to be an American dictator, has been behind it all, ready to use the immense John Doe following to put himself in power when the time is ripe. It is when John Doe discovers this plot that he becomes the Deeds-Smith fighter for the common people.

That's where Mr. Capra ran up against his great problem. How could John Doe win out, and defeat the evil personified in the would-be dictator? He is branded—justly enough on technical grounds, with all the proofs—as a fake: he had never intended to jump off any roof as a protest. His followers desert him because he was a fake. But he has been won to the ideals he has been preaching—all supplied by the girl, who provided them in the cynical pursuit of her own job. The only way he can win back the trust of his followers is actually to kill himself as threatened in the fake letter. But every provision has been made to keep his suicide from getting into the news, or from ever being known except by those whose interest is in keeping it hushed up. How could that be an effective ending, being merely one man's tragedy and completely futile as a blow or even a gesture against the enemies of righteousness? It would solve nothing—and nobody would like seeing Gary Cooper killed.

A plot-problem that is the hugest kind of a headache for any writer or director. The first solution to reach the public was John Doe kept from suicide by a plea by the girl—herself now converted and in love—to start all over again, and the wicked newspaper man and his henchmen announcing they were completely reformed. Since then the startling reformation of the villains has been simply lopped off from the picture.

Another ending is reported to have been made with John Doe Clubbers repenting of their distrust and—instead of the girl—being the agents to save their hero. Which sounds as if it might be the best way out. But the need to experiment with so many different solutions is a measure either of weakness in the plot itself or of an unfortunate timidity in resolving the plot, gambling on audience reaction rather than tackling the situation firmly one way or another. Which isn't satisfying in a picture that means to treat serious problems seriously.

Since Mr. Capra has got people into the habit of seeing meanings and lessons in his pictures they are sometimes apt to examine what he does with more probing an eye than may be called for. *Meet John Doe* can easily be taken for just a dramatic story, with a powerful and unscrupulous man plotting to use the sentimentality and gullibility of ordinary people for his own ends. Is it necessary to take this as Mr. Capra's solemn conviction that sentimentality and gullibility are the chief American characteristics, and that if they are used in the right way all will be well with us and with the world?

Anyway, Capra is as skilled as ever in keeping things moving along briskly and dramatically—though here and there are some pretty long speeches which for all his artful manipulation have something of the effect of a set aria in an opera. He is still gifted in making characters, particularly background characters, vivid and alive—though there is a reporter in this picture who appears to perform on the principle that tripping over a spittoon is always funny. Sentimentalities are neatly balanced with sharp commentaries on sentimentality. Folkways are brilliantly pictured again and again, particularly in the small-town mayor's befuddled antics, and in the broadcast of the John Doe convention. Such a characterization as James Gleason's is deep and revealing.

But it's a pity Mr. Capra, with so much good stuff to work with, had to fumble the point of it.

J.S.H.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Rage in Heaven

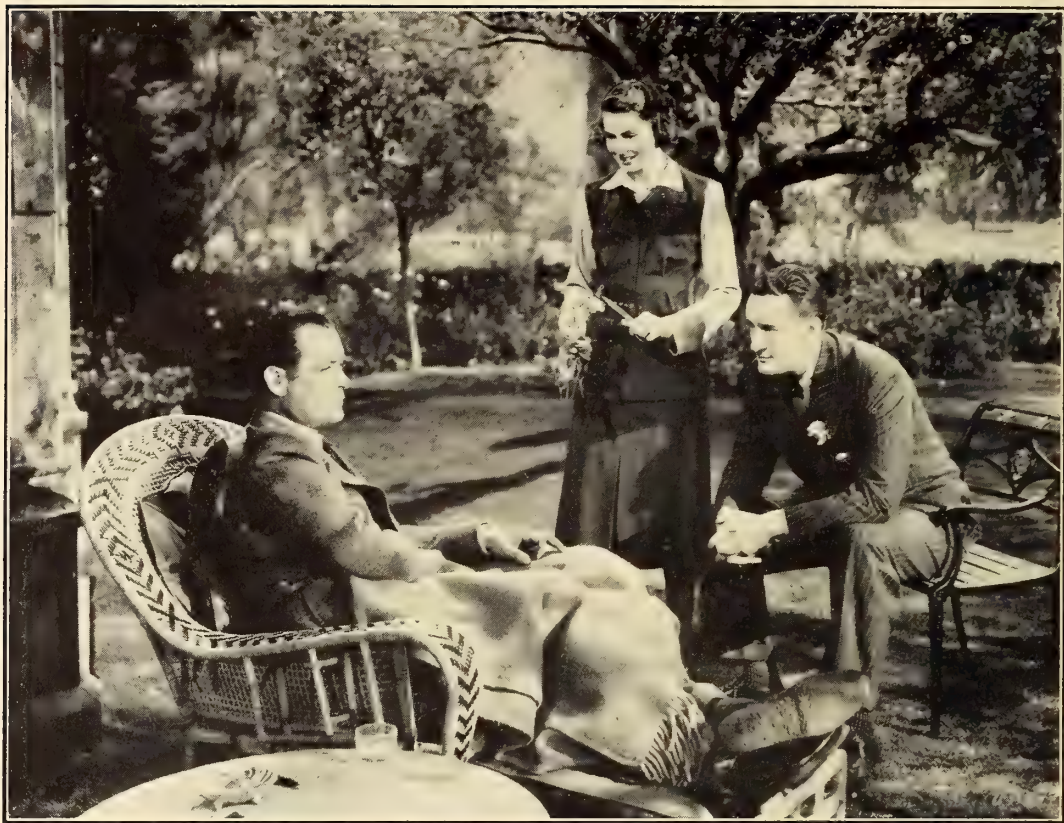
Screenplay by Christopher Isherwood and Robert Thoeren from the novel by James Hilton, directed by W. S. Van Dyke II, photographed by Oliver T. Marsh, A.S.C., music by Bronislaw Kaper. Distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Cast

Philip Monrell	Robert Montgomery
Stella Bergen	Ingrid Bergman
Ward Andrews	George Sanders
Mrs. Monrell	Lucile Watson
Dr. Rameau	Oscar Homolka
Mr. Higgins	Philip Merivale
Ramsbotham	Matthew Boulton
Clark	Aubrey Mather
Solicitor-General	Frederic Worlock
Bardsley	Francis Compton
Mr. Black	Gilbert Emery
Durand	Ludwig Hart

INSANITY has been prominent in many of the great books of this country but the films would seem to be even better equipped to handle the topic subjectively and give it a real treatment. It is rather disappointing therefore to find that American films to date have been content with some of the lesser studies and treated them only as conventional, objective cases of plot-unfolding. Given this condition, however, *Rage in Heaven* comes off as a pretty gripping story and a vivid picture of the damage which a paranoiac with homicidal propensities can easily create among his sane associates. The way it is handled is worth the telling.

The picture starts with an obvious description by a psychiatrist of the behavior and the reasoning of a paranoiac. Then Robert Montgomery steps before the camera to exemplify such a case with a keen feeling for the study. Some have elected to think of Montgomery as being unsteady, sluggish, or just plain bad in the part, missing the point stressed at the start of the picture that such a psychopathic case is characterized by a virtual atrophy of the emotions; his conduct is guided by a tiny knot of illogicality which is absolutely impenetrable and which is totally free from any emotional overtones. Montgomery materializes the case very well, playing with a detached suavity and a truly



Robert Montgomery, Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders in "Rage In Heaven"

hateful superficiality which shows by suggestion the essential weakness underneath the man. For plot, his normal desire to interest and influence those around him turns into a vicious effort to foist his weakness on them and hold them responsible. By every artifice he is able, he inflicts pain on his mother, his wife and his best friend, finally building an entirely fictitious affair between the latter two. He sets himself up as a victim of their hypothetical persecutions and then proceeds to wreck their lives by committing a suicide deliberately planned to hang this close friend as his murderer, the motive being love for his wife. The jury is satisfied with this ruse and the innocent man is condemned. Thus far, the film is on a high level and employs ingenious methods for telling its story.

Then, however, the plot sails away in an unrelated chase sequence with melodrama

that comes close to being ludicrous in comparison with the sound psychological structure which originally created the situations. This is short and fairly exciting though and puts a happy twist to an otherwise gruesome tale.

The virtue of the film is in the plot built on insanity and in the performances. Montgomery is good; Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders enact straight parts with dignity and sincerity; and smaller parts, played well by Oscar Homolka and adequately by Lucile Watson and Philip Merivale, contribute to the effectiveness of the piece. It is a lurid but valid study in psychological maladjustments and will have to stand as very good in its field until the American picture comes along which really gets inside a warped mind and presents the case with subjective reality as films are so manifestly able to do.

S.P.B.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Futures

LOOKING into the future may not prove pleasant in every field, but as far as the production news from Hollywood goes, there are promising things in the picture line to look forward to. Here are a few items among recent announcements which because of the directors or authors connected with them create anticipation and sometimes curiosity.

Alfred Hitchcock, whose reputation in England was built on mystery thrillers, is at work on a picture based on "Before the Fact," a book by Francis Iles which is a pet of murder-story fans. It is a tale of a woman who married a murderer, and all through the story in a state of almost hypnosis, is waiting to become his victim. Hitchcock can be depended on to keep up the suspense for all it is worth, and to lighten it with varied action and humor. Cary Grant, Joan Fontaine, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Dame May Whitty will be in it.

Lewis Milestone, whose masterpiece is still generally considered to be *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and who did such a fine piece of picture-making with *Of Mice and Men*, is turning again to comedy. He is good at comedy, to anyone who remembers *The Captain Hates the Sea*. First will come *My Life with Caroline*, with Ronald Colman. After that *Joan of Paris*, with that lovely French actress who has so far been seen here only in imported French films, Michele Morgan.

Several other first-rate French artists are now in Hollywood. Jean Gabin, of *Grand Illusion* and *Pepe le Moko*, is scheduled for a 20th Century-Fox picture, *Moon Tide*, with which Mark Hellinger will make his debut as a director. John O'Hara, the author of the present New York hit, "Pal Joey," is working on the script.

Dudley Nichols, one of the master script-writers, is adapting the Saturday Evening Post story, "Swamp Water." The director with whom he has most often worked, John Ford, is going to do the best-seller, "How Green Was My Valley."

Samuel Goldwyn is going to end his long unproductiveness with Lillian Hellman's

play, "The Little Foxes," in which Talulah Bankhead has been touring the country for months and months. Bette Davis has been borrowed from Warner Bros. to head its cast. William Weyler (*Wuthering Heights* and *The Letter*) will direct it.

That exciting story, "Rogue Male," has been appropriately re-titled *Man Hunt*, about a man who almost killed a dictator obviously meant for Hitler, and Fritz Lang is making it. A love-interest that was only hinted at in the book will undoubtedly emerge prominently in the picture.

Frank Borzage will turn from the cruel realism of *The Mortal Storm* to a re-make of *Smilin' Through*. With Jeanette MacDonald in it it will certainly contain some songs. King Vidor, who does everything well, will translate "H. M. Pulham Esquire" to the screen.

Gary Cooper is going to be Sergeant York in a biographical film Howard Hawkes has been working on. He is expected to be in the picture version of Ernest Hemingway's book "For Whom the Bell Tolls."

Garson Kanin, after he finishes the Ginger Rogers picture *Tom Dick and Harry*, is off to do his hitch in the army.

Herbert Kline, who made those outstanding documentaries *Crisis* and *Lights Out in Europe*, has just finished a similar picture in Mexico for which John Steinbeck did his first writing directly for the screen, *The Forgotten Village*. M-G-M has signed Mr. Kline to direct for them.

Since Greta Garbo laughed in *Ninotchka* and in so doing created a brand new American audience for herself (her popularity had been of a rather highbrow sort before, and much greater in other countries than here) she is going to do comedy again. She will play a double role, and it is rumored that she will even sing. "Garbo sings" may be as suspenseful a slogan as "Garbo talks" was years ago in the days of *Anna Christie*.

After an absence from the screen of something like seven years, Gloria Swanson is scheduled to come back in *Father Takes a Wife*. One can only wait and hope—she has planned come-backs before.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- f LANDSTORMENS LILLA LOTTA** — Ake Soderblom, Thor Modeen, Sicken Carlsson. Original screen story by Torsten Lundquist and Weyler Hildebrand. Directed by Weyler Hildebrand. Swedish films are especially marked for their joyous good nature and this is a splendid example. The story centers around the week's military training given 35-year-old men to go over the tactics they were taught 15 years earlier. At camp, the women of the towns serve in the "Lotta" corps, cooking and doing such chores. With the butcher given the chance to command the bank director, and a henpecked husband given a little freedom, comic situations are plentiful and the film does well with all of them. There are good tunes to this one also. (Swedish with English sub-titles) Scandia Films.
- m MODEL WIFE** — Joan Blondell, Dick Powell. Story and direction by Leigh Jason. Domestic comedy here has at least one foot on the bedroom threshold. Miss Blondell's problem is to keep her job by retaining as a secret her marriage, but to keep her husband at the same time through a series of domestic crises. This state of affairs produces some humorous situations and some trying times for the couple but it turns out happily in the end. Universal.
- f MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY** — Dennis O'Keefe, Peter Lorre, Florence Rice. Based on the Phillips H. Lord Radio Program of the same name. Directed by William Morgan. For nicety of balance, this yarn of murder among the city-bosses should be well-liked. The good humor is on a par with the tidy murders; the inevitable suspense of the chase is as entertaining as the troupe of eccentric new suspects which confuses the District-Attorney-to-be. It would be gratifying to find all who-done-its as well-blended and inoffensive as this one. Republic.
- f POT O' GOLD** — James Stewart, Paulette Goddard, Charles Winninger. Based on the radio program of the same name. Directed by George Marshall. Horace Heidt plays a swell band and Jimmy Stewart and Paulette Goddard romance satisfactorily in this fresh and tuneful musical show. A country lad comes to town to go into the health food business of his anti-musical uncle and falls in love with the daughter of the uncle's detestation, an old woman who runs a musical boarding house and who delights in the swing band that practices on her roof and makes life a misery for the health food tycoon during business hours. The film has about everything that could possibly make it the subtle, bubbling, infectious movie it is. The director, George Marshall, again shows the talent that made his *Destry Rides Again* an exceptional motion picture. United Artists.
- f RIDE ON VAQUERO** — Cesar Romero, Mary Beth Hughes. Suggested by the character "Cisco Kid" by O. Henry. Directed by Herbert I. Leeds. This series has produced superior Westerns and *Ride on Vaquero* is by no means the least entertaining or adept of them. The Cisco Kid is called upon this time to root out a gang of kidnappers who have been bleeding the ranchers for ransom and using his name to sign their notes. Mr. Romero rides, flirts and fights against the romantic background of old Arizona, and he does it with the skill and charm we have come to expect of him. Besides, with Miss Hughes in his arms, he gives us two Mexican dances, a real relief after all the vocal cowboys that must be endured. 20th Century-Fox.
- f ROAD SHOW** — Adolphe Menjou, Carole Landis, John Hubbard. Based on the novel by Eric Hatch. Directed by Hal Roach. This is a zany opus which picks up some mild nuts from an insane hospital and mixes them up with a traveling carnival, along with a moneyed young man who finds true love in the manageress of the show. It has a few peaks of splendid zanyism, but is pretty rough in between. United Artists.
- f SEA WOLF, THE** — Edward G. Robinson, Ida Lupino, John Garfield. Based on the novel by Jack London. Directed by Michael Curtiz. This is Jack London's lurid old yarn, written as he contemplated a bust of Herman Melville, but it is told with the acme of the Warner's individual touch. Entertaining?—No, it's too violent and shocking, but it is also a masterpiece of commercial art. The stars are good in complex roles, the supporters excellent. The dialogue is wizardry when sufficiently removed from Mr. London. Korgold's music is obtrusive but effective and, last but not least, the old recipe of ships, sea, and a fog have been used to get some stingingly beautiful photography. It will please the male trade especially. Warners.
- f SIGN OF THE WOLF, THE** — Grace Bradley, Michael Whalen. Based on a novel by Jack London. Directed by Howard Bretherton. Two shepherd dogs are the protagonists of this North Country idyll. One is used by villains to rob fancy fox farms, the other, while getting most of the blame for the depredation, actually is on the fox raisers' side and tracks down the thieves. The animals are beautiful and save a rather old-fashioned story from a yawn. Monogram.
- f TOPPER RETURNS** — Joan Blondell, Roland Young. Based on the character in the work of Thorne Smith. Directed by Roy del Ruth. Inspired by the wonderful insanities of Thorne Smith, the film does not quite reach the comedy level of the earlier episodes in the life of Mr. Topper. This is a murder mystery, gloomy old mansions, creepy servants and the rest of the gadgets of macabre movie melodrama. Topper gets into the mixup when the wayward ghost of the murdered girl fetches him out of his bed in the wee hours to help her run down the party who stabbed her and

save her friend whose life is in danger. There are plenty of humorous situations and fine acting on the part of the principals exploiting every comedy angle. United Artists.

- f LONE WOLF TAKES A CHANCE, THE —Warren William. Based on the work of Louis Joseph Vance. Directed by Sidney Salkow. The Lone Wolf and his handy valet are blamed for the death of a detective who was killed by a band of thugs in their attempt to kidnap the young inventor of a railroad car so equipped that it would be impossible to open without the combination. The train is carrying government plates. To save themselves, the Lone Wolf and companion set out on the trail of the crooks with the police close behind and after many narrow escapes they bag the gang and save the plates and the life of the inventor. There is a shade too much suspense and a shade too little speed to make this a first rate adventure film. Columbia.

- f SCOTLAND YARD—Nancy Kelly, Edmund Gwenn, John Loder. Based on the play by Denison Clift. Directed by Norman Foster. With London at war for background, Mr. Foster directs a fast but rather improbable spy story with superb cooperation on the part of the stars and the supporting cast. The most impressive parts of the film are the shots of the city itself and the men at work protecting and repairing it after the raids. 20th Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Informationals:

- fj BABY SEAL, THE—A cute baby seal frolics with a scotty and helps him get even with a dog who has been bullying him. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FEATHERS — An interesting and amusing study in color of some of the rare birds in the Santa Catalina Bird Park. Columbia.
- f GLIMPSES OF KENTUCKY (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk) — Quite naturally, this Technicolor travelogue features horse breeding and large stables, with national figures like Man-O-War for its chief actors. Metro.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 7—The usual wizards with Anna Neagle as guest. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 6—Boris Karloff, good-naturedly sustaining ribbing for his monster proclivities, shines to advantage among the veteran savants in providing information. RKO Radio.
- f MARCH OF TIME NO. 8, (7th Series) — "Australia in the War" — An enlightening survey of the war problems facing this large British possession, showing its might in the arms of the service and its natural resources and the way they are being used to defend the homeland, the Empire and democracy. There are good shots of the campaign the Australians waged in North Africa. RKO Radio.
- f* MEN OF LIGHTSHIP "61"—A stunning film based on an incident in the present war. A lightship, unarmed and heretofore immune to enemy attack, is strafed and sunk by two Nazi planes and the crew, set adrift in an open boat, perish in their attempt to row to land. A beautifully made picture, enacted by the Royal Navy and the men of the lightship station and having the fog-ridden North Sea as a setting, it tells a terrifying tale sincerely and simply and in a fashion as moving as poetry. It quite transcends the propaganda

in it and remains as a lovely tribute to the brave men who died maintaining safe for mariners the ways of the sea. 20th Century-Fox.

- f MIRACLE OF HYDRO, THE (Magic Carpet) —Lowell Thomas comments on a film tour of the hydro plants on the Columbia River. Interesting shots of spawning salmon and the work progressing on the power plants. 20th Century-Fox.
- f* MORE TRIFLES OF IMPORTANCE (Passing Parade)—The function of chance in making the discovery of digitalis as a stimulant, and of tannic acid as a remedy for burns are presented in a workman-like and quite dramatic way. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PLAYING WITH NEPTUNE (Sports Review) —A visit to various pools and sea resorts to see the superb form and ability of water sports champions. 20th Century-Fox.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 6—Baby Dumpling takes you to the training camps of the Army and Navy and shows you how Hollywood personalities are cheering up the men. Columbia.
- f SYMPHONY IN SNOW—A rather interesting film of the ways of folk on skis offering some very pretty shots indeed of snow clad slopes and ski champions in thrilling bits of their sport. 20th Century-Fox.
- f WILD BOAR HUNT (Hollywood Novelty)—Howard Hill again demonstrates his skill with the bow and arrow, finally ending an exciting fight between a boar and three dogs. Vitaphone.

Musicals, Novelties and Serials:

- f FREDDY MARTIN AND ORCHESTRA—This is not only a good band but the film's director has chosen to present it very engagingly with dancers replacing the usual vocalists. Vitaphone.
- fj RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY (Serial) Nos. 11-12-13-14-15—Dick Foran, Buck Jones, Original story by Oliver Drake. Directed by Ford Beebe and Ray Taylor. This winds up the western pitfalls of the gold mine. It is well-photographed and not too illogical. Universal.
- fj SKY RAIDERS (Serial) Nos. 10-11-12—Donald Wood, Billy Halop, Robert Armstrong. Original screen story by Eliot Gibbon. Directed by Ford Beebe. This is a better than average serial dealing with a miracle plane constructed for the National Defense. The plane and all characters involved undergo the vicissitudes peculiar to all serials but with more sanity and attention to detail than can be said for most serials. Universal.

Cartoons and Comedies:

- f CRIME CONTROL—Officer Robert Benchley inaugurates a campaign against those more heinous, though inanimate, criminals — the gadgets. Shots of Mr. Benchley tracking down the dastardly bedroom slipper, coping with an evil pen are good Benchley. Paramount.
- fj DIPSY GYPSY (Madcap Models)—Our puppet hero joins a gypsy band, all for love of the gypsy princess. Fortunately his swing-violin saves him and he can fit completely into the festivities. Paramount.
- f GOOFY GROCERIES (Merry Melody Cartoon) —Some of our more familiar trade-marked animals and characters come to life and dance an amiable revue until the animal crackers get loose. Vitaphone.
- fj* JOE GLOW, THE FIREFLY (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—Seeking individuality of expression, this cartoon uses a black background with shades of grays outlining the surrounding objects while a firefly prowls about in the night. Thus, added to the usual humor of a cartoon, there is splendid artistry comparable to that of a fine black-and-white print. Vitaphone.
- fj TORTOISE BEATS THE HARE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—Yes, the tortoise does beat the hare, but in a manner all his own. Technicolor and bright, saucy lines make this cartoon especially entertaining. Vitaphone.
- fj WHEN KNIGHTS WERE BOLD (Terrytoon Cartoon)—An amusing version of the Robin Hood story with some nice pokes at grand opera technique. 20th Century-Fox.

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The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and

recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)
\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures
\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

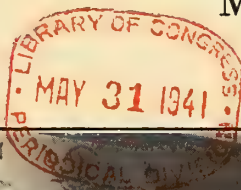
NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XVI, No. 5



May, 1941

RIGHT DEPOSIT



Citizen Kane's second wife leaves him (see page 7)

*Published monthly except June, July, and August by
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EDUCATIONAL BUILDING

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

- m* CITIZEN KANE—(See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 7)
- f* MAJOR BARBARA — (See Exceptional Photoplays Department, page 13)
- f* THEY MET ON SKIS—Wissia Dine, Henri Presles, Charpin. Original screen story by Fred Schiller. Directed by Henri Sokal. Delightful comedy, the lovely scenery of the French Alps, magnificent skiing. The plot French fluff at best, is expertly woven into the sport events and as expertly acted and directed. It seems that nobody, however tepid his passion for skiing, could see this film without pleasure. (French language with English subtitles). C. L. M. Corp.
- m* UNIVERSITY OF LIFE — N. Valbert, N. Dorokhin. Original screen story and direction by M. Donskoy. Against a background which vividly recreates the old Russian period, this film continues the life of Maxim Gorki, covering the period when he tried to get into the university, at 15, through his early contacts with the city people until about 25. It is splendidly acted and full of convincing atmosphere although the script is rather undramatic. One can trace easily the effect this part of his life had on his writings. (Russian language with English subtitles). Artkino Pictures.
- m* WOMAN'S FACE, A—Joan Crawford, Melvyn Douglas, Conrad Veidt. Based on the play by Francis de Croisset. Directed by George Cukor. This remake of a Swedish film that starred Ingrid Bergman turns out to be a gripping and unusually well made film. Miss Crawford's acting is solid and affecting and she carries off the dreadful facial disfigurement, injecting a just amount of horror and

piteousness. The rest of the large and notable cast perform with skill, particularly Mr. Veidt who is at his villainous best. The picture presents witnesses in a courtroom who tell the story of the woman who is on trial for murder by means of flashbacks. The music is remarkably good. Metro.

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

- f BIG BOSS — Otto Kruger, Gloria Dickson, John Litel. Original screen story by Howard J. Green. Directed by Charles Barton. The cause of clean government is championed by an honest governor in spite of the political "boss" being his long lost brother. Such issues as lynching, convict labor, and real estate chicanery are brought up in the governor's campaign and add value to a rather melodramatic plot. The picture of city and state political set-ups is not pretty at the start of the picture but it is helpful to be shown the forces which can combat them. Columbia.
- f COWBOY AND THE BLONDE, THE — Mary Beth Hughes, George Montgomery, Alan Mowbray. Original screen story by Walter Bullock and William Brent. Directed by Ray McCarey. A rodeo champion comes to Hollywood and falls into a romantic tangle with a luscious and temperamental star who, under the impact of his native charm, forgets her tantrums. Therewith production speeds up to such a degree that the studio feels it wise to give the handsome young ham a good contract to keep the blonde happy and cooperative. Western ways and Hollywood didoes are nicely blended to give good fun in spite of a drag here and there. 20th Century Fox.
- f FLAME OF NEW ORLEANS— (See Exceptional Photoplays Department page 11)
- f GREAT AMERICAN BROADCAST, THE — Alice Faye, Jack Oakie, John Payne, Cesar Romero. Original screen story by Don Ettlinger, Edwin Blum, Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Directed by Archie Mayo. Alice Faye and three young men who love her develop radio broadcasting from its inception right up to the national hook-up stage. The story of love and rivalry and broken hearts and disaffected friends has been told before, I think; it's used here anyway. But the tunes are very satisfactory and there are some good specialty numbers. All told, it's a very pleasant film. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GREAT COMMANDMENT, THE — John Beal, Maurice Moscovitch, Albert Dekker. Original screen story by Dana Burnet. Directed by Irving Pichel. Judea in 30 A.D. provides place and time for this parable of the struggles of an oppressed people to win freedom from the conqueror. A band of zealots led by John Beal plan the forcible overthrow of the Romans; wisely the young leader thinks to unite his local group with the large bands that are

(Continued on page 15)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

Managing Editor
BETTINA GUNCZY



Editorial Staff
ARTHUR BEACH
STEPHEN P. BELCHER, JR.
JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Summer Films

THOUGH Motion Picture Councils for the most part suspend their regular meetings during the summer months, and a lot of people go away from home for the whole or a part of the summer season, new movies will continue to be released and movie lovers, wherever they are, will continue to see them. Just as the National Board will continue to review them.

During these next months the producers will have finished adjusting their releasing methods to the requirements of the consent decree. We'll begin to get the first inklings of how it is going to work. But that won't necessarily be much of a concern to moviegoers, who in the vacation time may quite likely be seeing pictures in more of a holiday spirit, more for just the fun of it than with that dutiful air with which so many of them weigh elements of suitability and constructive value. That's the pleasantest way to see a picture, just to enjoy what is enjoyable in it without having to reckon up how good it is for other people to see.

Advance reports hint very persuasively that there are a lot of good films in the mak-

ing. Just how much many of them will be concerned with our present world problems remains to be seen, but at least the serious out-and-out anti-Nazi pictures seem to be on the wane, for the very adequate reason that people don't like that kind of movie entertainment well enough to make it profitable. Nazis, it is reported, will figure more as just the villains of melodrama—type villains like Indians and gangsters—instead of carefully portrayed exponents of a threatening and hostile ideology. Melodrama is good “escapism,” whatever its incidental propaganda touches. There will probably be a lot of pictures to make us forget things we want to forget whenever we can.

The National Board is trying this year to widen its survey of best films—films that are considered best not by professional critics and reviewers but by people who pay their money down at the box-office to see them. So those of you who are to be a part of this survey are urged to keep your memory in good working order, and keep notes if necessary, so that when fall comes you will remember the pictures that gave you most pleasure during the summer.

Please Bear In Mind When Making Fall Plans

THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
of the

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

November 13th to 15th

Hotel Pennsylvania, N. Y. C.

Everett Dean Martin

THE death of Dr. Everett Dean Martin on May 10th is the loss of another leading figure in the early days of the National Board of Review. As one of the prominent executives of the People's Institute he was associated with the founding of the National Board in 1909, and he became the Board's Chairman in 1919, a post which he held for four years, till the press of other work made it necessary for him to resign.

The statement which Dr. Martin made on accepting the Chairmanship of the National Board is such an excellent summary of the ideals and purposes of the Board through its whole existence that we want to reprint it here.

"It is with a good deal of reluctance that I have accepted the chairmanship of an organization which has the responsibility of telling people in general what sort of pictures it is good for them to see. It seems to have become necessary for someone in this commercial age to undertake such a job. But at best it is a rather presumptuous thing to do and I doubt if anyone is wise enough to do it in such a way that more good than harm may result from it all. Certainly no one should undertake such a task who has not, first of all, some genuine appreciation of art values and a sense of the possibilities of the motion picture as a form of popular art. The task requires a kind of reflective thinking which transcends all narrow sectarianism and provincial prejudice and is at the same time sympathetic, human, and capable of understanding what the average man wants.

"Society to-day is overcrowded with little people who have more zeal than tolerance, whose chief interest seems to be in forcing their neighbors to give up the things they really like and accept another man's standards of taste.

"The National Board of Review has long been associated with the People's Institute and my acquaintance with the spirit of its work has convinced me that it has gone about its task in a manner free from those things which make goodness at once indispensable and unendurable. The National Board has had an incalculable influence in raising the general standard of motion picture art, and

its success has been largely due to the fact that it is purely advisory and not a coercive censorship. My sole reason for accepting this responsibility is the fact that this issue between the advisory and coercive methods of human improvement involves the whole question of whether freedom is possible in American democracy.

"Something of the spirit of the forum is essential, I think, to the successful democratic solution of this as of every other public problem. People respond best to ideals when they are permitted to feel they can contribute something on their own account. An extended and very close association with popular assemblies has convinced me that the coercive method is worse than a failure. People's opinions, their likes and dislikes, are in no way changed by having standards forced on them from without. Any attempt to regulate popular amusements by law—beyond the protection of common decency, which is everywhere a regular police function—always results in resentment, furtiveness, hypocrisy, increased social unrest, the lending of color to the statements of those agitators who say that this is no longer a free land. And what is more, such attempts always destroy personal responsibility. Individuals under such a regime naturally feel that standards are set for them by someone else and consequently must be all right. The bureaucratic body to which such responsibility is transferred falls back upon an arbitrary and unreasoning formalism which kills both art and morals and soon becomes only the tool for political ends.

"It has been said that a legal censorship would be a blow at civil liberty quite as serious and of the same nature as a permanent censorship of the press. To my mind this is true. If the American people surrender the free theatre, they might as well give up free press, free speech, freedom of assemblage. They will encourage a species of legislation which in the end will destroy the last vestige of personal responsibility. Freedom along any of these lines is liable to abuse, and those who publish, speak, or produce must be held responsible. But it is one thing to hold an agent responsible for these abuses. It is a

very different thing to try to prevent all danger of such abuses beforehand by handing over both freedom and responsibility to a petty officialism. This latter is absolutely out of harmony with American ideals and traditions. It is rank Prussianism, the very thing which we went to war to drive out of the earth.

"There is no greater menace to the manhood and womanhood of this land than the growing tendency to treat everyone as if he were either a moral pervert or a kindergarten child who needed constant protection against himself. Surely, with all the safeguards we now have, people must be trusted in some measure to have an hour of amusement after

their work, free from the meddlesome interference of bureaus, secret agents, autocrats, censors and official regulators.

"The National Board of Review will do its utmost to help save the theatre-going public from this most autocratic form of Prussianism, while at the same time lending its aid and counsel to every effort made in the direction of higher artistic development. It is not bureaucracy which will eradicate the evils of the motion picture but a finer sense of artistic values, and these two are mutually exclusive. I trust that in this work the National Board will continue to enjoy, as it has in the past, the confidence and cooperation of both the producers and the public."

The Quality of Propaganda

A BIT of whimsey called *One Night in Lisbon* might be named the true inciter of this article. It was an extraordinary film, mixing lush romance and British propaganda in a fashion as unabashed as it was artless. Of course it failed in its more serious purpose; even Americans can hardly take seriously Miss Billie Burke's statement: "Into every English girl's life a little American should fall." But it was a very amusing comedy, whether that was the intention, or whether the trowel work was too liberal to escape being ludicrous, I am not at all sure. The producer took it seriously enough to give it an A production and to assign to it such stars as Fred MacMurray, Madeleine Carroll, Billie Burke, John Loder and Edmund Gwenn. Paramount even went to the expense of building an elaborate set of a bombed London Street, which (so the advertisement runs) made Londoners viewing it affirm that it looked just like home.

As propaganda however it would make any American audience howl with amusement, if not derision, at the puerile stuff that is to inspire them to great deeds and large expense. The movie industry ought to remember America is a burnt child; the last war did wonders to destroy its gullibility about atrocity films and "our cousins across the sea" gadgets. Does all this mean that

the nation is content to nest itself in its own isolated security? No. There are large portions of the citizens who want to avoid hostility at all costs; that we all know. There are equally large numbers of Americans who, given valid reasons, are willing to cede their wealth, their energy and their lives if need be to protect the traditions of this country and the civilization of the Western world. Added to that there is the official determination of the government of the United States to aid Britain and her allies in all ways short of war. A people's congress and a people's president, duly elected and lawfully empowered, have pronounced this determination by due process of law. What then is the need of propaganda, in films or elsewhere? Is it a just and effective way to strengthen the nation against all and every eventuality?

To the first of these questions the answer I think is: yes, there is a need. To the second: it is a just and effective way to strengthen the nation. Propaganda has gotten a bad name; people are instinctively suspicious that any strident efforts to get them excited enough to risk their own security may turn out to a crook's trick to fleece them. In this they are not without reason. The horror stories of the first war with their resultant antipathies, the dreadfully un-American things that took place here in

the name of freedom, democracy and the rest, on sober recollection appalls them. They realize that one does not secure unalienable rights by stoning a dachshund or breaking a German butcher's window. They fought that war to make democracy safe only to find their victorious allies as equal as the Hun to Hunnish methods of reprisal and themselves sneered at by sophisticated Gallic and British statesmen for the childish idealism of their president. Now we are at it again. Now we pray we will be more tempered. The Wilsonian principles were not stupid; the American reasons for 1917 were not hysterical. The uses we made of both were a blunder.

In this conflict we have facts, such as *Mein Kampf* and *Das Kapital*, such as the program of the Reich in conquering countries and in the conquered countries, such as the jackal valiance of Stalin and the shoddy victories of Mussolini, such as the overbearing sorties and under-educated pronouncements of the Japanese. We are not dealing with a civilized and Western Germany. In Germany now civilization has taken up its abode in the concentration camps and the charnal houses. Like Russia it has raised a new cross that is not the cross of the West. Europe where every town yielded a saint is trod from the Arctic to the Mediterranean by feet brutalized by anarchy, barbarism and a god fiercer than Moloch called the State. Like it or not, Britain alone holds up the principle that the individual himself is of vastly more value than any state; that when a state deifies itself it commits sacrilege to God and treason to man. The unalienable rights of the Constitution were not given to us by anyone. We have them as we have eyes and faculties; to protect them we made the state. When the state infringes them we have the right, nay we have the moral duty, to destroy our creation turned monster and rear a new order wherein our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor are safe. These rights we may suspend in a crisis to make them safe for those who come after us and for our own sake if we survive, but they are the marks of free men which no man or state justly may infringe without our free volition.

This can no longer make sense to the Nazi, the Communist, the Fascist. They have a new gospel in the spreading of which mark Poland, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Balkans. What sins these nations have to their credit are like those of a sane man; there is hope that reason may one day convince them. The Totalitarians perpetrate the crimes of the insane; for them there is no hope but death. The gangrenous is beyond repair.

But there is still a further consideration: these bandit nations are not nationalistic, they are missionary. Therein lies our own danger, even if we should think fit to abandon to the fury the few remaining states who profess the dignity of man. The men we have entrusted with our destiny know this. They know how choice a convert we must seem to those who would mold us to their heart's desire. We are rich and our influence is far reaching. We would be the most fabulous loot of the world. To escape that the government has asked all Americans to rally round and do their bit, labor to escape slavery, industry to escape exploitation, all to maintain our prerogatives as men. The movie industry has one major role to play in this nation defense: to make clear to all and sundry in these United States the blessings we possess and the dangers with which we are threatened. To do this they must make films—and such films are propaganda films.

Now what should such films do in order to be of service to the nation? First they should make the man in the street vividly aware, and the man in the mansion also, just how precious the rights we have as Americans are. Nothing of any importance has been done to show how democracy is working today, that is democracy at peace, the drama of what is being built, of reforestation, of the rehabilitation of youth after the great depression, of the hundred and one things that your government is expending your money on for the greater good of all. If the ground work had been laid in bringing vividly to the people of America the glory of democracy in action, there would be little need to rouse up the fires of war to stimulate the people to rise to the national emergency.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, ARTHUR BEACH

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Citizen Kane

Written by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Orson Welles, produced and directed by Orson Welles, photographed by Gregg Toland, music by Bernard Herrman. Distributed by RKO-Radio.

The cast

Charles Foster Kane Orson Welles
Kane's mother Agnes Moorehead
Kane's father Harry Shannon
Walter Parks Thatcher George Coulouris
Jedediah Leland Joseph Cotten
Mr. Bernstein Everett Sloan
Emily Norton Ruth Warwick
Susan Alexander Dorothy Comingore
James W. Gettys Ray Collins
Raymond Paul Stewart
Thompson William Alland
Herbert Carter Erskine Sanford
Matiste Fortunio Bonanova
Headwaiter Gus Schilling
Mr. Rawlston Philip Van Zandt
Miss Anderson Georgia Backus

IF it were possible to find a person who has not been exposed to all the tow-row and hullabaloo that preceded the release of *Citizen Kane*—better yet if it were possible to find a person who has never even heard of Orson Welles—it would be interesting to get the reactions of such a one on seeing Mr. Welles's new, and first, film. Only such a person can go to this film without some bias, for or against, or without some involuntary curiosity that is on the lookout for things which have nothing to do with the faults or virtues of the film itself—which indeed are no part of the film's being inherently interesting or not.

However, the Welles gift for showmanship being what it is, particularly his gift for showing off himself, you have to take your biases and curiosities along with you and see if the picture won't make you forget them. The chances are it will, at least for pretty long stretches.

In a season that has had no startling surprises among its movies, *Citizen Kane* has struck most of the reviewers like a revelation and sent them hunting up all the dynamite adjectives in the dictionary. A revelation the picture is, as a matter of fact, a revelation to those who have forgotten, or who have never known, of what a motion picture can do technically. Welles is a smart young man and a clever one, with all his huffing and puffing, and he has had practical experience of both the stage and the radio, and has done highly effective things in both those forms. He knows what can be usefully carried over from the theatre and from the air-waves to the screen. Moreover, he has obviously, and with intelligence, studied the motion picture medium in its masterpieces, particularly some of the silent films made in Germany and Russia in their great creative days: it is with these that some of his most striking effects of camera angles and composition awake comparison.

Your student of old movies can cite previous examples of everything Welles (with that fine cinematic photographer Gregg Toland) does with his camera, as well as the way he has built his story, so it would be a losing argument to assert he has done anything original or revolutionary along those lines. What he has done, with all the fresh force of originality, is to use these things in his own way for his own purposes, and to vivid effect. He gets arty now and then with his picture-making, but for the most part his pictures are made not for their own sake but to keep the whole thing alive and on the move.

Two things are noticeable, in his visual

presentation of action, which must have come from his experience in mounting stage-plays: a most economical use of closeups, leaving the nearness or farness of objects to create their emphasis in relation to the whole instead of putting the emphasis on these objects by cutting them off from the whole; and frequently keeping an entire scene in view, like a stage naturally lighted for as far back as it reaches, without focusing the camera at any one distance. Close-ups and maskings are all very well, but they have a good deal of the mechanical emphasis of italics and capitals in printing: a good writer can make his points stand out with their relative value by his arrangement of words without falling back on style or size of type to be emphatic, and in the same way Mr. Welles, by getting away from the determined cutting back and forth that gave montage its name and made it the rage for so long, has arrived at a style of visual narration that has a solidness and unbroken flow which is enormously potent in creating the illusion of reality. On the same principle his deep scenes create reality by their depth of vision: an early episode of the picture is a vivid example, where in the foreground is the boy's mother dominating what is happening, back of her her husband and the lawyer in the background of her thoughts as well as in the background of the scene, and farthest back of all, in the action and purpose of the scene, the boy seen outdoors through the window playing his happy solitary game in the falling snow. It is like a chord making full and sustained harmony instead of a solo melody floating by itself in the empty air. Not till the end of the picture is it clear what that scene foreshadowed—only then is it apparent how completely right and eloquent it was, done in just that way.

Like stage sets too are his rooms boxed in with natural-looking ceilings, which not only create realistic perspective but give him reinforcement for some of his most effective symbolic shots—Kane towering against his surroundings in a small space, or dwarfed in the gargantuan immensity of his Xanadu castle. Too much like stage and theatre are some long scenes with the camera rooted interminably in one spot, like the one where

he wrecks his wife's room after she has left him. Somehow what must have been meant for terrific violence dwindles into mere petulant hurry-scurry that is emotionally static for all its frantic scrambling about.

Welles must be the first director to bring something important and valuable from the radio to the screen. He knows how to build dramatic effects through the ear alone from having done it so often on the air, and from that knowledge he gives sound on the screen an extended dimension, with echoes and reverberations, with orchestrations of voices, that deepen and vivify his scenes for the hearing in much the same way some of his sets do for the eye.

There's a lot to study in the way Welles has made his picture, much more than can be taken in all at once. Some of it is obvious but mighty little of it is crude or unskillful, and it is subtle where subtlety counts most powerfully. Above everything else it is full of young and vigorous energy. That must be why some people find it exhausting—some even tiresome.

It's just as well to forget all the stridently circulated rumors about the sources of the story. Charles Foster Kane is enough like too many well-known figures to call him a copy of any single one. Actually, in this picture, he is a neurotic man who never really grew up—rather, perhaps, a man who was neurotic because he never grew up. A case history. Snatched away from a happy childhood with his mother to be brought up in almost limitless wealth, he reached manhood still wild and undisciplined, grabbing here and there and everywhere for something he never found. A phenomenally prominent figure in his time, he was a mystery to his time, and a mystery to himself. It isn't so simple as to say he found wealth and power not enough—that easy moral platitude. The secret of his unhappiness and failure and his fabulous doings went deeper than that. The plot of the picture is the search for that secret. Perhaps it was in the last words he spoke before he died, "Rosebud". A reporter goes to all the people who knew him best, from his boyhood to his death, to find out what those words could have meant. He never found

out. But the picture tells it, as definitely as it could without overtelling it.

The story is presented in flashbacks, some of them overlapping, from the viewpoint of the lawyer who took Kane from home as a small boy and built up his enormous fortune for him, from that of the business associate who was with him from his first newspaper days, from that of the school-mate and friend who finally broke with him, from that of the second wife who left him, and finally from that of the butler who knew about his last days when there were no more friends or family. Some of the phases of his life are little more than hinted at, some shown in all their important detail. After a tempestuous youth he settled down to work and became a dynamic crusading newspaper publisher, a yellow journalist, with immense influence and power. He started promisingly in politics till a scandal shook public faith in him. He married a woman of high social standing and had a son, but the tremendous drive of his ambition kept him from making his family happy and at length the same scandal that wrecked his political career wrecked his marriage. That scandal was scandalous only in the way his political rival played it up: it was a friendship for a childish girl with not much of a voice whom he made his protégée and tried to make an opera singer. Eventually he married her and she became the center of his life, for whom he built an opera house where the public would not listen to her and a huge castle which he could never make a home. And there, because being with him was such a miserable emptiness, she left him, aging and with only servants about him till he died alone.

What does it all add up to—what does it prove? Mostly that Mr. Welles can write, produce, direct and act a remarkable motion picture. That Mr. Welles is a dynamo, which isn't news. At times he is masterly—in the swift way, for instance, he covers the years of Kane's first marriage, packing everything essential into a few sequences. Also masterly, and curiously so in a man so stentorian in other ways, is his gift for dramatic reticence when the lack of reticence (which most directors would have been tempted to lest the public miss

what they were driving at) would have thrown the subtle build-up of his characterization out of balance. He has brought something to the motion picture that is partly his own personality and the Mercury Theatre players who are fresh and welcome people on the screen, and partly a craftsmanship that adds elements from radio and stage to cinematic technique it did not have before. Most of all, probably, he has invigorated the movies with a kind of vitality that is sure to have effect on other movie makers. Whether *Citizen Kane* will have a big appeal in its own right, without benefit of publicity, remains to be seen. People who like a straightforward story with likable people in it may find this picture confusing and unsympathetic, even cold and unpleasant. A psychological study of a very complicated man, told without signposts for the slow-witted or inattentive, is pretty much of a gamble. How it will fare will come out when the picture leaves the haunts of the highbrows and starts jogging through the second and third runs.

At any rate Orson Welles has landed in the movies, with a splash and a loud yell.

J.S.H

Rated Exceptional

The Road to Zanzibar

Producer, Paul Jones. Director, Victor Schertzinger. Based on a story by Don Hartman and Sy Bartlett. Cameraman, Ted Tetzlaff. Produced and distributed by Paramount Pictures.

The cast

<i>Chuck</i>	<i>Bing Crosby</i>
<i>Fearless</i>	<i>Bob Hope</i>
<i>Donna Latour</i>	<i>Dorothy Lamour</i>
<i>Julia</i>	<i>Una Merkel</i>
<i>Charles Kimble</i>	<i>Eric Blore</i>
<i>Proprietor—native booth</i>	<i>Luis Alberni</i>
<i>Dimples</i>	<i>Joan Marsh</i>
<i>Fat Lady</i>	<i>Ethel Greer</i>
<i>French Soubrette in cafe</i>	<i>Iris Adrian</i>
<i>Saunders</i>	<i>Georges Renavent</i>
<i>Monsieur Lebec</i>	<i>Lionel Royce</i>
<i>Solomon</i>	<i>Jules Strangbow</i>

THE sight of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby sitting in huge birdcages where they are being fattened up by cannibals to be the main course in an African barbecue is an experience very close to poetry. And it is merely one of many delights in this screwy, joyous, tuneful movie. Let loose on the un-



Bing Crosby and Bob Hope among the cannibals in "The Road to Zanzibar."

offending continent of Africa two Americans who procure their bread and cheese by providing daredevil entertainment at carnivals and fairs, usually ending in public riots, proceed through a series of hilarious situations and hand out a line of gags no less laugh stimulating.

Stuck with a bogus diamond mine, that in a weak moment Bing had bought with their joint savings, and two wily young women, who have sold the boys a bill of goods posing as maidens in distress, Bob and Bing set out on a safari across Africa (a chart is provided showing their somewhat erratic route), whiling away the tedium of the trek with here a song—Bing croons a pretty obbligato to the marching chant of the natives—and there a romantic moment when Miss Lamour practices up on the technique she intends to use on a rich boy-friend (still unmentioned) whom she is to meet on the end of the journey. When the boys discover the ruse they are piqued; but selfish feelings are set aside when they find Dorothy's clothes mangled

by leopards and suppose the lady herself subjected to the digestive juices of the big jungle felines. They hold impromptu obsequies and bury the torn raiment; but the truth transpiring that she has merely been swimming (a scene that offers a leafy variation of the sarong) they blow up and abandon the safari to the female chiselers. The most delightful sequence arrives with the wandering diamond seekers finding some jungle drums whereon they joyously beat a tune that apprises cannibals that they have visitors. This starts a controversy: one faction claiming Bob and Bing as gods, the other regarding them as a change of diet. A trial by contest is arranged to find out the truth and Bob Hope is elected to wrestle a gorilla. Adroitly interesting the savages in the pleasures of a free-for-all, the boys escape and find their way back to civilization. The picture closes with their reunion with the young women who have mended their ways and are employed under Bing's supervision as stooges in a sawing-a-girl-in-half act that Bing has thought up.

The three qualities of *The Road to Zanzibar* that stand out above all others are its spontaneity, the unaffected fun the stars had in making it and, of course, Bing Crosby. There are those who call Mr. Crosby a genius—a title that is getting handed around a lot these days—and I do not find myself in the way to contradict them. Crosby's manner, like Chaplin's (perhaps we should dare to say like Orson Welles'), is his in an inalien-

able way. He possesses an overwhelming good nature, a subtle sophistication, a unique flair for humor, a droll invention, and all are fused and balanced by an artistry that in its perfection is very apt to be missed, leaving the satisfaction and exaltation of a well constructed drink. Stiltedness, pretention, artfulness are just not there. He is one of our most effortless and refreshing entertainers.

Rated Exceptional

A.B.



Bruce Cabot meets Marlene Dietrich's double in "The Flame of New Orleans"

The Flame of New Orleans

Original screen story by Norman Krasna. Directed by René Clair, photographed by Rudy Maté, music and lyrics by Charles Previn and Frank Skinner. Released through Universal.

Cast

Claire	Marlene Dietrich
Robert	Bruce Cabot
Giraud	Roland Young
Zolotov	Mischa Auer
1st Sailor	Andy Devine
2nd Sailor	Frank Jenks
3rd Sailor	Eddie Quillan

Auntie	Laura Hope Crews
Bellows	Franklin Pangborn
Clementine	Theresa Harris
Samuel	Clarence Muse
Brother-in-Law	Melville Cooper

HAVE you ever been to a quilting bee and, while the others were sipping raspberry punch, had someone slip you a zombie on the side which you lit into joyfully? Perhaps no one has but the personal satisfaction would be akin to the relish which *The Flame of New Orleans* affords.

René Clair, late of France and England, has always been noted for the spritely, unexpected way he unwinds a simple tale, imbuing it with an under-current of captivating satire. That he fumbles a little in his new surroundings, with American audiences to cater to, was perhaps to be expected. Some of his acutely pointed but good-natured punches at social conventions are missing. The appearance of some unrelated and inexplicable new note is withheld in this picture, detracting from that buoyancy we hope for. But the picture is a good initial effort and it is to be hoped that Clair will feel more and more at home as his experience in Hollywood grows.

This is a romance in the gallant south back in the days when a carefully dropped handkerchief brought results and when a pirate was not something on its way to a costume ball. In sumptuous New Orleans, democratic America nearest approached an aristocracy with its courtly manners and its facades of leisurely wealth, and incidentally it nearest approached Clair's native land, so it is there that he poses his actors in polite duels and his actresses peeping from behind their needle-work frames. And yet, telling of love in this fairy-tale southland, what could be more impudent than to begin with a bridal gown floating down the Mississippi? That is the puckish whimsey that is Clair's signature and the picture bears the stamp throughout.

It being spring, all of us feeling a little younger, and Frenchmen being notoriously well-acquainted with the art of l'amour, *The Flame* is a timely lesson to American directors, actors and audiences alike on the nature of love. Clair's point is that this love racket is nothing to go banging one's head against a stone wall about—tragic sacrifices at altars of love are so much balderdash—yarns of undying love have been barking up the wrong tree entirely. Actually, love is a game—a slightly maturer form of cops-and-robbers—which any number can play though three make the cosiest party. When sides have been chosen, he continues, one of the party gives the signal and the game is on. The lady immediately lapses into utter limp-
idness (this is of course Miss Dietrich's

familiar forte though previously played straight) with occasional sighing and a hint of a smile when the others seem to be losing interest. The men, on the other hand, are pitted against each other and at once fly into stances. Since it is all make-believe, they can go the whole hog if they wish and the merrier will be the game. From then on, ordinary acts may be run through like attending a concert or paying a social visit but it must be carried out in make-believe with the rose-colored glasses of l'amour worn throughout. And if you seem to be losing, remember there are plenty of others to play with you in the next town. If everyone plays his part well, as is done in this picture, the game is great fun.

This then is what is told in *The Flame of New Orleans*. How it is put onto celluloid is to have the actors and actresses going through their lines decked out for all the world like birthday cakes and with angelic poker-faces. But lurking underneath the screen or behind the sofa are the Clair imps ready to write in little comments between the lines which shift the meanings and add delightful twists to the action. Miss Dietrich, for example, may be singing a sweet little ditty about the blush of a rose at morn and an admiring flotilla representing the flower of New Orleans' manhood may be standing by in the height of decorum. But the imps set to work by introducing Mischa Auer as a reliably fake count from Moscow who starts whispering to his neighbor at one end of the room. The audience will never know what he whispered but it is one of the funniest lines in the show if you judge by laughs for, as the whisper goes from man to man, gradually nearing Roland Young who is the victim of La Dietrich's persecutions at the moment, there is a smacking of lips and an ogling in the direction of the singer which leaves nothing to be told. This innuendo is the old Clair.

Judging from the game she plays, *The Flame* may have been the guiding star to all our latter-day gangsters, but as long as her methods are so disarming and her eyes so big and wondrous, one can't resist her appeal. Who could not pity her when the devilish game she plays nearly boomerangs

back at her and she has to invent a hussy-sister to cover her own misdeeds? Who could blame her when she finally tosses the game right into poor Roland Young's face at the brink of their nuptial altar and runs off with the dashing pirate, Bruce Cabot? And lastly, who could fail to smirk unabashedly at a picture which closes with a scene so pregnant with the they-lived-happily-ever-after spirit as that last glimpse of the retreating pirate's bark with a Dietrich arm lazily reaching out the porthole and indolently dropping her bridal gown into the ever-languid Mississippi? Oo-la-la!

Apparently René Clair can turn out an entertaining piece of comedy in any language but he must get better acquainted with his new environment and its conventions before we are to get those barbed bits of kindly satire or those unexpected turns of Gallic wit which characterize his previous films.

S.P.B.

Rated Honorable Mention.

Major Barbara

Adapted by Bernard Shaw from his own play, produced and directed by Gabriel Pascal, photographed by Ronald Neame. Distributed by United Artists.

The cast

Major Barbara Undershaft	Wendy Hiller
Andrew Undershaft	Robert Morley
Lady Britomart Undershaft.....	Marie Lohr
Adolphus Cusins	Rex Harrison
Bill Walker	Robert Newton
Snobby Price	Emlyn Williams
Mrs. Baines, The General	Sybil Thorndike
Peter Shirley	Donald Calthorp
Rummy Mitchens	Marie Ault
Stephen Undershaft	Walter Hudd
Charles Lomax	David Tree
Sarah Undershaft.....	Penelope Dudley-Ward
Jenny Hill	Deborah Kerr
Morrison	Miles Malleston

MAJOR BARBARA is as important as whatever importance lies in the ideas of Bernard Shaw's that the picture may succeed in putting over.

These ideas are presented in a plot that goes this way: a young professor of Greek



Marie Lohr, Robert Morley, Wendy Hiller and Rex Harrison in "Major Barbara"

is trying to lecture to some people on the street but no one listens to him. He moves along to investigate how a Salvation Army speaker attracts crowds. This speaker is an attractive girl known as Major Barbara, he falls in love with her, and joins the Army as a bass drum player in order to be near her. He becomes engaged to her and more or less joins her family, which is one of the richest in England. Her father is a munitions maker named Undershaft, so powerful he controls the government, who hasn't lived with his family for years. He comes back to visit them, to settle some money matters with his wife, and finds Barbara the only one of his children who interests him, and he is not at all shocked, as her mother was, by Barbara's joining the Salvation Army and trying to save souls. She wants to save his, and he agrees to go to one of her meetings if in return she will make a visit to his cannon factory. At the Army shelter he offers to help her in her work by giving her money, but she insists that salvation cannot be bought that way, that his money mustn't be given without giving himself. The General of the Army feels differently about it, however, and accepts a large sum from him in spite of the cynical spirit in which he makes the gift, which so disillusion his daughter that she leaves the Army. But to keep her promise she goes to see his munitions plant, and is so impressed by the way his workers are housed and fed that she decides to live and work among them. Meantime Undershaft has been troubled by the problem of finding an heir to his business, who by tradition must always be a foundling strong enough to have made his way up in the world against every kind of an obstacle. By a device as fantastic as something by W. S. Gilbert the Greek professor qualifies as the right sort of foundling, and everything ends with glee and happiness all round, even for a tough customer who couldn't be saved by the Salvation Army but became clean and respectable through getting a job at Undershaft's factory.

Naturally, in the course of this picture, Shaw's wit and his boasted ability to see things as they are take many incidental shots at such things as education, politics, religion, government, family life and social distinctions, but the principle dicta that are empha-

sized are that poverty is the worst of crimes and that handing out bread to starving people in the name of religion is not much of a way to save their souls. The final moral victory of the munitions maker over the Greek professor, and the successful argument to persuade him to carry on the business, is a challenge to "fight war with war." Just what that means is not clear: people in this day may take it to mean Hitler, though no such meaning is suggested and is of course something Shaw couldn't have had in mind when he wrote the play, back in 1905.

As a matter of fact Shaw hasn't added a single idea or observation to what he wrote nearly four decades ago, and whatever timelessness there is in the picture is purely coincidental. There is a lot in the picture for those who remember the play, or who enjoy witty talk and paradox for its own sake. It is doubtful if even intelligent and quick-minded persons will have much of an idea what the picture is all about unless they not only remember the play but have read the forty-some pages of introduction to the play which Shaw found necessary to explain what he was driving at. Boiling down three acts to a decent movie length hasn't produced strength or clarity so far as the main issues are concerned, and has cut out many subtle interrelations of characters and events that were very pleasant and helpful. Only the simpler people, those who came to the Salvation shelter, seem complete and live individuals. Barbara is impressive by her sincerity, but there is something mystical about her father that doesn't register, and the Greek professor is utterly incomprehensible. Unless these three, the three strong characters, are clear, where are we?

There is an impressive list of English players in the film, all of them capable of being good under good direction, but here as stagey as if they were behind footlights. And stagey is just what the whole picture is, because a movie doesn't move movie-wise just by having some of the scenes shifted around into different settings, or keeping the camera jumping from spot to spot. A motion picture is written as a motion picture before it is photographed as one, and *Major Barbara* is simply a lot of dialogue snipped from the play and stuck together and transferred to

film. Mr. Shaw may have thought that his work on *Pygmalion* qualified him as a script-writer, but he could not have realized how much he owed to Anthony Asquith's help in the writing, and to Asquith and Leslie Howard in the direction of that film or he would have refused to make another without their help. Gabriel Pascal was little help at all except in providing sets and actors.

Major Barbara is unusual among pictures because it contains matter that is food for the profoundest thought. It is often brilliantly amusing, sometimes moving. But if it brings Shaw to many people who do not already know him it will do more than seems likely.

J.S.H.

Rated Honorable Mention

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY has announced a new Motion Picture Program in the College of Arts and Sciences to begin in the fall. Colleges and universities can function in two ways with respect to the motion picture—they can offer courses in critical appreciation and thus enhance the demand for genuinely artistic films and they can supply a basic training for some of the new writers and producers who will be needed in turning out a constantly improving supply of films. It is the latter and more exceptional approach which New York University is inaugurating at this time, seeking to provide a cultural training in the liberal arts and sciences, with emphasis in the fields of English composition and English literature, history and the social sciences, music and the fine arts, and secondly an introduction to an orientation in the technical problems of motion-picture writing and production.

The motion picture study is to be in charge of Mr. Robert Gessner, who has taught various courses in screenplay technique and motion picture appreciation and has written for and adapted material for motion picture production. He is a member of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board and "The Story Content of Early Films", by him appeared in this Magazine in March, 1940. Further information about the course may be secured from Washington Square College of Arts and Science, New York University, Washington Square, New York.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

said to follow the lead of a Carpenter of Nazareth and sets out to find Him. Instead of a great warrior the Carpenter turns out to be a simple Teacher spreading a doctrine of love of God and one's neighbor. The young zealot turns to practice the new teaching and alienates his followers. The film was made on a low budget and uses a none too original or tasteful script, but many of the sequences are attractively photographed and the marriage scene is well made and has a good musical score. In fact, the music used throughout is good. The power of the material employed does a good deal to redeem the work of the actors and the director, whose native talent it may be hoped was embarrassed by the screenplay. Recommended for church use. 20th Century Fox.

f HERR HUSASSISTENTEN (The House Assistant)—Elof Ahrlé. Original screen story by Fleminge Lynge. Directed by Ragnar. A nice little comedy suffering from too much dialogue but bubbling over with the infectious fun of Mr. Ahrlé. The story concerns itself with the very successful attempt of a gay and gifted young man to get even with two chaps who had swindled him out of his garage. Scandia Films.

f KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE—Mary Martin, Don Ameche, Oscar Levant, Rochester. Based on the play by Clare Boothe. Directed by Victor Schertzinger. The comedy in this musical is very smart, presumably it is compounded of part of Clare Boothe's play and Mr. Levant's snippy wit. It tells the story of a girl's ambition to crash the Broadway stage and her device of planting herself in the old South where a talent hunting party is abroad to find a southern belle to portray the part of a sweet, unsophisticated maid in a new musical. The music is good and is well handled by Miss Martin and the Hall Johnson Choir. It is slow in spots but has the advantage of an A production and a fine cast. Paramount.

f KING OF THE WHITE ELEPHANTS, THE — Remu Kriyakorn, Pairin Nilsen. Story and production supervision by Pridi Bonomyong. Directed by Sunh Vasudhara. An historical tale, romantic and simplified, depicting a war between two Thailand kings of the 16th century. The story is naive and naively acted, but for that very reason has a charm all its own. The struggles made by the actors using English for our benefit is both unfortunate and touching. There are some fine bits of photography chiefly of elephants and the battle, and attempts are made to give local color by the use of native songs and dances and the locale of Siamese cities. The film has a message too; the good king in many overlong speeches points out the evil to all men that the lust for power and conquest of their rulers brings about. The movie stresses the comedy value of plurality of wives; evidently Westerners are supposed to think that very funny. Thailand production distributed by Louis Bonomyong.

- f LADY FROM LOUISIANA, THE — Ona Munson, John Wayne. Original screen story by Edward James and Francis Faragoh. Directed by Bernard Vorhaus. The outfitters have skipped nothing in recreating scenes of old New Orleans—the bowered patios with grill work and cool fountains, the riotous masqueraders during Mardi Gras season, the colorful French quarter, the ravaging Mississippi at high flood tide—but the others working on this tale of killing the lottery-racket in the city have been less attentive to their duty. However, these sights should please the audiences. Republic.
- f NURSE'S SECRET, THE—Lee Patrick, Regis Toomey. Based on the story by Mary Roberts Rinehart. Directed by Noel M. Smith. A pleasant enough detective story wherein the police are not made as stupid as usual. The death by a gun of a young man is thought to be accident or suicide but a bright young inspector smells murder and has his girl friend, a nurse, planted in the house where the death occurred to spy out possible clues. She does and the case is neatly solved. The film could be a little faster and less complicated. Warner Bros.
- m ONE NIGHT IN LISBON—Madeline Carroll, Fred MacMurray, John Loder. Based on the play by John Van Druten. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. A romantic comedy with a large helping of pro-British propaganda. It's the tale of a shy English girl overwhelmed by a man from Texas and their jaunt to Lisbon with a few spies thrown in. Funny in places, well acted and possessing fine reconstructions of London air raids. Paramount.
- m PENNY SERENADE — Cary Grant, Irene Dunne. Original screen story by Martha Cleavens. Directed by George Stevens. This is a radically new kind of thing for Irene Dunne and Cary Grant to do; they play a married couple who can't have children and adopt a little girl. Episodic and sentimental, it tells its story simply and rather realistically and can be quite moving in spots. The sets and the camera work are excellent; Mr. Grant's acting is distinguished. Columbia.
- f PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE, THE—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Laraine Day, Bonita Granville. Original screen story by Lawrence P. Bachmann and Max Brand. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. The question of whether the paralysis of a skating star's leg was due to a rush operation by Dr. Kildare goes to court with considerable at stake, but the jury eventually settles the case satisfactorily for all concerned. The series continues to maintain healthy interest in hospital life and Barrymore moral doctrine throughout this new crisis. And incidentally, Kildare is still single. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f SINGING HILL, THE—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette, Mary Lee. Original screen story by Jesse Lasky, Jr. and Richard Murphy. Directed by Lew Landers. Friendship and simplicity are all that Gene has to teach the rich city-bred ranch-owner to make her reconsider selling the ranch and thereby ousting its old hands. This western is as innocent as that but Autry's routine formula is matchless for homey ease and spontaneous music. Who cares if the people are cardboard, so long as Gene and the rolling hills keep on a-singing? Republic.
- f SIS HOPKINS—Judy Canova, Charles Butterworth, Susan Hayward, Jerry Colonna. Original screen story by F. McGrew Willis. Directed by Joseph Santley. The trials of coping with a snobbish aunt and cousin with whom she has come to live make small impression on the refreshing good humor and "palliness" of Miss Canova as she sings and skips through this latest version of the story. Miss Hayward is good as the nasty little cousin; but the best parts revolve on the comedy which is in the capable hands of Butterworth and Colonna. Although a trifle too long and rather a variety show, it has good tunes and a fine cast and avoids sentimentality. Republic.
- f THEY DARE NOT LOVE—Martha Scott, George Brent, Paul Lukas. Original screen story by James Edward Grant. Directed by James Whale. Dealing with refugees—persons deserving of our greatest sympathy—this film will find a sympathetic audience. In it, a prince of former Austria makes a gentlemen's agreement to give himself up to Gestapo agents in this country in return for seven lesser Austrians in German concentration camps. The agreement is, of course, a trap and both he and the lady he loves seem doomed until the happy twist at the end. Deliberate direction prevents the picture being as great as the cause it champions. Columbia.
- f THIEVES FALL OUT—Eddie Albert, Joan Leslie, Jane Darwell. Based on a play by Irving Gaumont and Jack Sobel. Directed by Ray Enright. Swift pacing and comedy make this domestic tale of young love and turmoil highly entertaining. Actually, upon close inspection, the plot, taken from an old play, almost breaks with all its turning but buoyant performances by all and the "shoot-the-works" spirit in which they perform redeem it satisfactorily. Warner Bros.
- f STRANGE ALIBI — Arthur Kennedy, Joan Perry. Original screen story by Leslie T. White. Directed by D. Ross Lederman. Scarface rides again! Although the production is on a budget basis, this political crime thriller didn't stint itself as to grizzly corpses and wild chases. Kennedy's acting is equal to all the torture he goes through and the film is admirably edited. Ignoring the question of encouraging this type of gangster film, let's chalk this up as sizzling entertainment, if slightly lurid. Warner Bros.
- f TUMBLE-DOWN RANCH IN ARIZONA—Roy Corrigan, John King, Max Terhune. Original story by Milton Raison. Directed by S. Roy Luby. Because of its shots of the University of Arizona rodeo and the scenic background which Roy Corrigan's ranch provides,

this "Range Buster" western stands out. The routine plot concerns crooked railroad men buying up property rights unscrupulously until the stalwart threesome rounds them up before the law, but it moves easily and the acting is pleasant. It stands up well in its class. Range Busters.

- f WAGONS ROLL AT NIGHT, THE—Humphrey Bogart, Sylvia Sidney, Eddie Albert. Original screen story by Francis Wallace. Directed by Ray Enright. A circus story, with a tough boss who is trying to keep his kid sister from contact with carnival people. But a young country store-keeper is taken on because of his skill with animals, to be the lion tamer, meets the sister and they fall in love. Jealousy and the unrequited love of a fading fortune-telling lady, complicate the drama, which is pretty mixed in motivation but colorful and exciting in its circus atmosphere. Warner Bros.
- f ZIEGFELD GIRL—Jame Stewart, Judy Garland, Hedy Lamarr, Lana Turner. Original screen story by William Anthony McGuire. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. An exceptionally long picture telling the tale of the rise and fall of beauties whom Ziegfeld glorified. The musical numbers are capable and tuneful; particularly nice is "Minnie from Trinidad" which includes a fine dance routine by Antonio and Rosario as well as Miss Garland's best chance to show off her singing. Not by any means the best musical ever seen though it has a splendid cast and is mounted well on the lavish side. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f ABROAD AT HOME (New York Parade)—Showing amusing spots in New York that at first sight may be taken for foreign show-places. New Yorkers will be amused. Columbia.
- f ARCTIC SPRING TIME — Father Hubbard takes his camera on a lovely trip among crags and landscapes of great beauty in the North with dramatic shots of the natives and Arctic wild life. 20th Century-Fox.
- f BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, THE—Quentin Reynolds comments on this fine film showing the labor and the terrors that beset the English and the Canadian navies and air force giving safe conduct to the supply ships that ply between the New World and England. Some of the camera work depicting dogfights and sea warfare is unusually fine and vividly instructive as to the fashion of modern heroism. 20th Century-Fox.
- f GLIMPSES OF WASHINGTON STATE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk) — This is an up-to-par traveltalk in Technicolor showing the points of geographical interest in Washington. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f GOING PLACES No. 90 — "The Modern Way Down East"—being a review of the old landmarks of Connecticut now prized as museum pieces, and concentrating on the pieces relating to Nathan Hale. Universal.
- f GOING PLACES No. 91—"The Trail of Father Kino"—Good material for a short is found in this early Jesuit Father who toured the southwest starting many of the old missions with the help of his converts. Universal.
- f INDIAN DUREAR (Fascinating Journeys) — A sumptuous film of the glamour and ritual of a Hindu prince receiving the formal tribute of his subjects. Paramount.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 9—Alice Marble
- m* takes a fling with the regular brain-busters and shows up very prettily, too. RKO.
- INTERNATIONAL FORUM—A discussion of the contemporary situation with special reference to our own duties, now and in the future, is presented by such eminent authorities as Wythe Williams, William L. Shirer, Linton Wells, and Dorothy Thompson. They very definitely support the thesis of all-out aid to Britain as well as make some interesting prognostications of what the year may bring forth. Columbia.
- f JUNGLE ARCHER (World of Sports)—Hunting with bow and arrow is the exhibit here, by Tex and Mrs. Stone, using the wild peccary and puma of Mexico as targets. Columbia.
- f MARCH OF TIME No. 9, THE (7th Series)—"Men of the F.B.I.—1941"—This chapter is up to par in covering the training of the young investigators and citing the methods used in tracking down a hypothetical agent working in a munitions plant. Needless to say, considerable emphasis is put on the part the F.B.I. must play in building for defense. RKO.
- f MEET THE STARS No. 5—Interspersed with shots of sundry celebrities viewing the Long Beach Naval Base are interludes with Charles Butterworth and his inventions to aid Defense in the Butterworth style. Republic.
- f ON THE SPOT (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—Ted Husing answers question on odd terms in sport. Paramount.
- f OUT OF DARKNESS (Passing Parade Series)—Quite a supply of drama is packed into this short which tells of the inability of the Germans to stamp out publication of the magazine "La Libre Belgique" during the last war. To add to its timeliness, the film closes with the news report that the paper has been revived again now. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 5—The usual scientific oddities: photoelectric cell signs, kitchen gadgets, and methods of biological research shot in color. Paramount.
- f SAN FRANCISCO (Columbia Tour)—Although there is little continuity connecting them, this film covers many shots of various aspects of the metropolis of the West, especially of the bridges and Chinatown. Columbia.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 90—Among the many odd and unrelated subjects which this covers, the grotesque animals made of twisted and gnarled driftwood stand out best, though all the subjects are interesting. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 91—The art of stained glass window-making is treated in this chapter together with a curb-service bank and sundry other oddments. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 92—Strange is no word for the girl who can write or draw equally well with either hand, even using both at the same time. Universal.
- f SWORD SOLDIERS (Sportscope)—Some highly proficient fencing is shown in this short with the men of a West Point class demonstrating. The film closes with a display of the saber's use on dress parade. RKO.
- f THIS IS ENGLAND (Cinescope) — Columbia's London representative, Ed Murrow, has compiled a graphic series of scenes of England designed to convey the British spirit under fire. This bitter subject is handled with sincerity and admirable taste. Columbia.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 5 — Among other interesting things you'll have John Barrymore take you through his trophy collection and make comments. Paramount.
- f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 4—"The Spirit of 1941"—The camera invades the factories producing arms for defense around Washington with very good shots of machinists at work on naval and air equipment. Columbia.
- fj* WILLY AND THE MOUSE (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade)—The use of white mice as tests for determining the methods of learning are here presented in a completely absorbing way. This subject and its tie-ups with actual pupils having troubles with their school-work are interesting in themselves, but added to this we have splendid handling of the picture and beautiful human appeal from the mice, making a short especially recommended for schools. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

(Continued on back cover)

Community Motion Picture Activities

THE effective leadership given by many Motion Picture Council presidents has been recognized in their re-election for the second, third and on to eighth and ninth term.

Some of those who have been drafted to continue presidential service are: Mrs. Lawrence S. Akers, Memphis (Tenn.) Better Films Council; Mrs. George C. Cleary, Elizabeth (N. J.) Council for Better Films; Mrs. Clarence Echols, Dallas (Texas) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Russell C. Evick, Columbus (Ohio) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Joseph E. Friend, Louisiana Council for Motion Pictures; Mrs. Elmore Godfrey, Jr. Knoxville (Tenn.) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Frank A. Linzel, Motion Picture Council of the District of Columbia; Mrs. J. W. Livingston, Better Films Council of Grand Rapids (Mich.); Mrs. George A. Pedrick, Wilmington (Delaware) Better Films Council; Mrs. Howard S. Shepard, Worcester (Mass.) Better Films Council.

Note: There are many new presidents to be announced, and this reminds us to say that if your election results have not been reported please let us have them.

THE Editorial Committee of the Staten Island (N. Y.) Motion Picture Council has arranged to have the young people's groups assist in evaluating the films reports Mrs. F. B. Balano, Publicity Chairman of the Council. These groups consist of Camp Fire Girls, Wagner College students and junior members of the Staten Island Chapter D.A.R. Another community interested in having the young people help to prepare the Photoplay Guide is Caldwell, N. J. The plan calls for cooperative interest of the West Essex Motion Picture Council and the English Department of the High School.

WITH a banquet and special program The Motion Picture Council of Columbus and Franklin County (Ohio) observed its eleventh anniversary on April 21st. A member of the Juvenile Court talked on "Juvenile Delinquency," followed

by a panel discussion. Other subjects presented were "The Teaching of Motion Picture Appreciation," "Censorship" and "The Legion of Decency." The Columbus Council meetings are always open to the public which is showing increased interest and making special contact with the management regarding pictures for children, latest word from Mrs. Grace E. McGuire, Council Publicity Chairman reports.

ORGANIZATIONS often observe their birthdays by banquets and special meetings but the Atlanta Better Films Committee this year did something different. "In January," writes their president Mrs. O. D. Bartlett, "we had a huge birthday party for ourselves. Each member brought a 'white elephant' gift. We had 12 tables representing the 12 months, decorated to carry out the idea, and each one sat at her birthday month. Fortunes and prophecies were read and items told of the famous movie stars born in each month. I find that as long as the members themselves are taking some part in the program they enjoy it much more and the attendance is much better." We agree hard working members do deserve a benefit for themselves occasionally.

MRS. BERNARD A. FOSTER, Chairman of the Spartanburg (S. C.) Motion Picture Council, tells us that through the efforts of their Council the American Legion Auxiliary recently sponsored a showing of the film *Land of Liberty* with excellent success. They felt that this was a very worthwhile effort on their part and of much benefit particularly to the school students in their city.

THE first library interest in book-film tie-up was evinced by the Cleveland Public Library in the '20s. The librarian of the Main Library at that time and until last year was Miss Marilla Freeman. She has lectured and written widely about the subject, one early article was in this Magazine "Tying Up With the Movies: Why?

When? How?," September 1929. One recently noted was in the Publishers' Weekly where she remarks the incentive given to the reading of "aids to making the most of one's self" caused by a motion picture when she says "The Cleveland Public Library devised on its bookmark a short group of 'Books Eliza Should Have Read' in connection with *Pygmalion*, that enchanting story of transformation from guttersnipe to lady, and to this day its shelves have been swept clean of these."

The Film Yesterday Today and Tomorrow, by Walter Spearman, of the Department of Journalism, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. 36 pages.

YOU might expect one who has been president of a Motion Picture Council (Charlotte, N. C. Motion Picture Council, 1934 and 1935) to provide useful study group material, but when that person later becomes a university instructor in journalism, including the teaching of motion picture appreciation, you can expect something especially helpful. Such a pamphlet has recently been prepared by Professor Walter Spearman in the series of Extension Bulletins of the University of North Carolina as a study guide for clubs of the state. Under the headings "How the Movies Grew," "What the Movies Are," "Where the Movies Will Go" are quoted various opinions from published sources with a bibliography and suggestions how this material may be used for discussion. Groups outside the state will find it practical too. The cost of the bulletin is 50c, unless you live in North Carolina; then it is 25c.

Hand-Book for Previewers: prepared by Mrs. Dean Gray Edwards. 24 pages.

IF you have ever sought in vain for just the right descriptive word to use in reviewing a motion picture you will find this little pamphlet a useful ready-reference to have around. It lists 2000 words arranged under their application to type and various component parts of pictures. Mrs. Edwards is president of the Motion Picture Council for Central Queens, Long Island, N. Y., and chairman of the Eastern Preview Divis-

ion, Committee on Motion Pictures of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and from her experience with pictures and people saw the need for such a service. Copies can be obtained at 50c each, or 40c in quantity, from Mrs. Edwards at 9 Kew Gardens Road, Kew Gardens, N. Y.

Survey of Motion-Picture Equipment in Colleges and High Schools in the United States and Its Territories, compiled by Nathan D. Golden, Chief, Motion Picture Division of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

MUCH information is available about the theory of motion pictures as education but less about their actual use in the classroom for this purpose. To correct this a survey was undertaken in the latter part of 1940 by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the U. S. Department of Commerce to ascertain the facilities for showing educational and industrial motion pictures among the colleges and high schools of the various states. The results are now available in statistical charts published in bound form. The more than 500 of these provide information which it is believed will be helpful to educators not only in their regular teaching work but in the furtherance of any educational activities in the National Defense program. Sales copies are available through the Educational Department, Radio Corporation of America, Camden, New Jersey, at a cost of \$3.00 each.

NEEFA is not a government organization. It is the New England Educational Film Association formed to promote the intelligent use of motion pictures as teaching aids by acting as a clearing house for information, by co-operating in previewing, selecting, and evaluating suitable materials, and by supplying these materials in a simplified standardized way for lower and uniform fees. Mr. R. Haven Falconer, Director of Audio-Visual Education, Dartmouth college, is Chairman. Members of the Board of Directors represent Harvard University; CCC, First Corps Area; Boston University; University of Maine; Massachusetts Department of Education and University of New Hampshire.

- f YOSEMITE, THE MAGNIFICENT (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—The subject has been done before, and perhaps more entertainingly, but rarely has Technicolor so beautifully captured the scenic grandeur of the National Park. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f YOU CAN'T FOOL A CAMERA — An interesting short introducing top cameramen in the Metro studios and some shots of forthcoming MGM pictures. There is a fine shot of a suspension bridge being blown down. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MUSICALS

- f SHADOWS IN SWING—For those who like the music of Jan Garber, this well-produced recital should please; the tap dancing will please everyone. Universal.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj DIZZY KITTY (Color Cartoon) A pleasant and spritely adventure in the life of an unusually unbalanced cat who most effectively refuses to be bathed in preparation for her appearance in a cat show. Universal.
- fj DOG'S DREAM, THE (Cartoon)—A cute little dog finds himself in an Alice-in-Wonderland kind of place and almost gets frightened to death. But he wakes up and apparently determines to lead a better life. Quite amusing. 20th Century-Fox.
- f FORGOTTEN MAN, THE—Robert Benchley, in his way, tells and enacts the sad role of a mere father of the bride. Paramount.
- fj LITTLE MOLE, THE (Hugh Harmon Cartoon) —The title role character has, of course, a

great deal of difficulty in seeing in the broad daylight, which brings all kinds of troubles down upon him. The pastel Technicolor of this cartoon is very agreeable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- fj 1-2-3, GO (Our Gang Comedy)—The Gang takes the opportunity to teach a few first principles on safety in crossing streets which will not be wasted on any audience, and for which this old institution in comedy is to be congratulated. The picture should have a wide showing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f READY, WILLING BUT UNABLE (All Star Comedy)—This is one of the best El Brendel comedies because it is one of the phoniest. His problem is to get rid of a corpse which is in reality a window-dummy, and there are many laughs before this corpse reaches its final resting place. Columbia.
- f SPEAKING OF ANIMALS — DOWN ON THE FARM (Animated Antics)—For a new twist to movie magic, this film has some of the more common domestic animals shown doing typical things, and speaking their parts, by drawing in by hand their lip motions. Its quite funny. Paramount.
- fj SWING CLEANING (Max Fleisher Gabby Cartoon) — While cleaning out the king's palace, Gabby thinks up a few clever stunts to ease the work, but they prove a boomerang. Paramount.
- fj UNCLE JOEY (Terrytoon Cartoon) — A cute cartoon about a mouse and a cat. The cat isn't as wicked as cartoon cats usually are, but he gets worsted anyway. 20th Century-Fox.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES, INC.

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The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the

motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

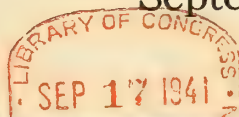
A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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The Little Foxes Hold a Family Conference (see page 4)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

m* **BLOOD AND SAND**—Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Rita Hayworth, Nazimova. Based on the novel by Vicente Blasco Ibanez. Directed by Rouben Mamoulian. One of the most magnificent examples of Technicolor yet made, well directed and elaborately produced. Mr. Power is good as the illiterate but thrilling artist of the bull ring, and he is supported by a well chosen and brilliant cast, the least effective of which is Miss Darnell. Miss Hayworth sings and dances and plays the part of the siren beautifully. To speak of Nazimova is difficult without applying to her interpretation all the superlatives used in this report. The scenes in the bull ring are dazzling in color and beauty and the fight itself is thrilling, though the sensibilities of an American audience are spared by the deletion of the sanguinary episodes. The film loses nothing by comparing it with the famous silent version starring Rudolph Valentino. Of course Mr. Power cannot quite approach the passion or fire of the original. The rest, however—production, support, photography, sets—far and away are superior to those of the first version. 20th Century-Fox.

f ***BLOSSOMS IN THE DUST**—Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Felix Bressart. Based on a story by Ralph Wheelwright. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. A sumptuous job of color and production having all the benefits of a fine cast and an absorbing if somewhat tearful story. The film records the work of a Texas lady who, with great courage and admirable intelligence, establishes a humane way in which to deal with foundlings in her own state. Miss Garson and Mr. Pidgeon are remarkably good and, considering the length of the picture, the director deserves some applause for the adroitness with which he keeps it moving. Recommended for schools and libraries. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f ***CHARLEY'S AUNT** — Jack Benny, Kay Francis. Based on the play by Brandon Thomas. Directed by Archie Mayo. A lot of money and talent went into this aged affair and happily enough the result is quite delightful. Of course the part sustained by Jack Benny is a bravura piece but it loses nothing in having the zany art of the star to project it for all it is worth. The rest of the cast play their roles with the proper overstatement and to hilarious effect. The production itself leans definitely to the lavish side and is an excellent example of period comedy freshened up by adroit direction. 20th Century-Fox.

m ***DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE** — Spencer Tracy, Ingrid Bergman, Lana Turner. Based on the novel by Robert Louis Stevenson. Directed by Victor Fleming. This familiar story is to the screen what Hamlet is to the stage, and with some justification. The story is inevitably interesting and a good vehicle for any actor. Mr. Tracy plays the split personality to the hilt with fine effect and Ingrid Bergman makes a splendid Ivy Peterson. The production is handsome to complement the fine acting, though considerable cutting might help. It is only in the literal direction that one can raise a complaint, but that won't greatly diminish the pleasure provided by the Stevenson classic. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

fj ***FRANK BUCK'S JUNGLE CAVALCADE** — Narration by Phil Reisman, Jr., spoken by Frank Buck. Pure Buck and a mile wide! This film is composed of the best animal pictures of Buck's three films made on trips into the Malayan jungle in search for zoo specimens. It is mostly populated by tigers, leopards and pythons, but you also find all makes of monkeys as well as fanciful birds, crocodiles, mouse-deer, and honey-bears. The narration is informative and well-spoken, the inserted sound-effects realistic, and the many adventures are completely absorbing. Naturally, its educational value recommends it for school use. RKO Radio

m ***HOLD BACK THE DAWN**—Charles Boyer, Olivia deHavilland, Paulette Goddard. Based on a story by Kittie Frings. Directed by Mitchell Leisen. Essentially this is a love story, and a good one, but due to very sharp direction it becomes much more. Mr. Leisen realizes that love does not imply fancy interiors and a life-o-Reilly. So Boyer is made a cheap gigolo refugee from France, trying to cross the Mexican border without much regard for the law. Miss deHavilland is a plain school-teacher from the States whom he rushes into a wedding just to effect his U.S. entry. Miss Goddard has been his partner in crime for many seasons. From this the usual triangle is built, but it is told with many brittle and ironic twists, and with the sharp contrasts of cheapness and wealth, beauty and tawdriness, that characterize life. The top honors go to the director although everyone does well to make the picture an unusual and exciting one. Paramount.

(Continued on page 19)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

Managing Editor
BETTINA GUNCZY



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STEPHEN P. BELCHER, JR.
JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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Are Our Movies Making Propaganda?

WE have been seeing how long it takes a huge country like ours, even in great emergency, to get together so it can work together, rapidly and effectively, toward a single goal. All sides of a question and all degrees of opinion should, and do, take their time to express themselves, and the time that takes makes it so much slower for the mass effort to get its direction and move. There has to be unity of thought and feeling before there is community of action.

What part the motion picture is taking, and will take, in the national defense effort, isn't clear yet to the ordinary observer — maybe not to anyone else. And now it appears that the industry has got to go through one of those congressional investigations, to find out whether Hollywood is or is not trying to push us into war. To people who have no axes of their own to grind — who aren't themselves active or potential propagandists seeing everything that doesn't express themselves as propaganda against them — it doesn't seem that the American motion picture is, or ever has been, trying to force any particular creed or attitude on the public. As a general thing—and of course you can find exceptions—the movies have always been a fairly accurate representation of the American people. Not of different sections or strata, but of the whole mass. Not as to

fact (few movies hold the mirror up to our daily lives naturalistically) but as a general picture of what most of us like. The movies couldn't go on in their successful dependence on public patronage if the public didn't like them. They would have to be subsidized if they were to try consistently to show what the public doesn't want to see, and billions of subsidy couldn't drag audiences into theatres to look at things that weren't attractive in themselves.

Our guess is that any honest and unbiased investigation will make all this clearer than ever, and that the motion picture will go on being mostly the public recreation that is all it pretends to be—the thrill the laugh, the easy shedding of a few tears that so many enjoy as a “good cry,” which furnish common relaxation for nickels and dimes and quarters.

The incidental educational value, or moral or patriotic uplift, that gets into pictures which rise nearer to the levels of truth instead of sheer make-believe, will be more evident as movies make their most valuable contribution to national defense by showing the best things of American life in their truest form. That might be called propaganda, too, but what politician would dare to object to it?

THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
of the

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

November 13th to 15th

Hotel Pennsylvania, N. Y. C.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

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The Little Foxes

Adapted from her play by Lillian Hellman, assisted by Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell and Arthur Kober, directed by William Wyler, photographed by Gregg Toland, music by Meredith Wilson. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn, distributed by RKO-Radio.

The Cast

Regina Giddens	Bette Davis
Horace Giddens	Herbert Marshall
Alexandra Giddens	Teresa Wright
Ben Hubbard	Charles Dingle
Oscar Hubbard	Carl Benton Reid
Birdie Hubbard	Patricia Collinge
Leo Hubbard	Dan Duryea
David Hewitt	Richard Carlson
Mrs. Hewitt	Virginia Brissac
Addie	Jessie Grayson
Cal	John Marriott
William Marshall	Russell Hicks
Manders	Lucien Littlefield
Julia	Terry Nibert
Hotel manager	Alan Bridge
Simon	Charles R. Moore

ONE of the screen masterpieces was about greed, and called *Greed*. A highly unsuccessful picture made by Eric Von Stroheim from Frank Norris's novel "McTeague," and now to be seen only in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art in a form comparable to a well-preserved ruin surviving from ancient times. Age is not what made it a ruin but the need of practical showmanship to cut a huge meticulously detailed adaption of a novel from something over thirty reels to a length that audiences could sit through with comfort.

Greed goes on as one of the dominating passions of life but it has waited seventeen years to be made the subject of another fine movie. *The Little Foxes* has no resemblance to *Greed* except in its motivation and in their both being outstanding motion pictures. Made from a play instead of a novel it is compact and stream-lined, with a dramatic

unity that is just as much an advantage on the screen as on the stage. Lillian Hellman has taken her own play and done expertly the things to make it a motion picture — deepening its background, visually and psychologically, expanding its action from the confining walls of a room to the whole arena of house and town in which the life she pictures is lived, and creating the flow of action that makes a movie move. She has also provided a contrast to the grimness of her original with one of those rare injections of a young love story that is justified by more than box-office motives—one that has dramatic point, and is an integral part of the theme instead of being a mere ornamental frill.

The story is about mean and greedy people succeeding in their meanness: a family of modern carpet-baggers building a fortune for themselves by exploiting cheap labor in a southern town. The labor element is remotely in the background, and whatever social significance it has is dwarfed by the struggle in the foreground—the struggle in the Hubbard family, between two brothers and their sister, to corner the wealth they foresee coming to them—a result of mutual scheming and effort but to be divided as unmutually as possible. They have already got most of the town's business into their clutches, but there is much more to get if only sister Regina can persuade her husband to put his money into an expansive importation of northern methods. The difficulty comes from the husband's being a decent and ungrasping fellow, with no greedy motives to appeal to and in such a state of health that he can't be hurried too roughly. He is intelligent and clear-sighted, moreover, and able to face what he can't

avoid seeing. Regina, as agent for her brothers, has no easy job.

The plot is intricate and tightly woven, full of suspense and surprise and clash of character. In the end the brothers and sister (and a nephew of extraordinary sliminess) get what they were after, but they are like the two men in *Greed* handcuffed together and dying of thirst in the desert — each with a stranglehold on the other and facing a prosperous hideous future. The husband has escaped one way, the daughter another.

Gruesome and—though no corpses clutter the stage at the end—tragic. And gripping. Miss Hellman wrote it that way, and William Wyler directed it in masterly fashion that way—and Samuel Goldwyn, who as a producer has a peerless record for worthwhile effort and fine accomplishment, let it be that way. These vitally necessary figures are behind it all, and in the foreground most easy to see is a whole cast of actors suited to their parts and acting at their best. Some of them are new to the screen but likely to be tempted to stay in Hollywood, where they will be lucky if such good opportunities as in this picture come often. They make up most of the Hubbard family, a despicable lot who are portrayed so skilfully that interest in watching them completely cancels dislike of them. Patricia Collinge belongs in this new group though she is only a Hubbard by marriage, who plays a brutalized southern lady of the older type in a way not easy to forget, and Teresa Wright is that great rarity among young actresses, a girl youthful in something more than looks, learning sensitively about life and growing up before our eyes as she finds her feet and takes her own first steps. Herbert Marshall emerges from the dim familiarity of numberless dull or sticky parts, clear and strong. And of course Bette Davis, from the dominance of her part, dominates the picture though her fellow players are too good to be obscured. Beneath her Gibsonian pompadour there's a modern, more self-centered Lady Macbeth, her mind and her hands full of daggers. She acts the part superbly. The servants, too, must be mentioned, so rare it is to find such parts not mere stock figures but living people with their own personality and human dignity.

The other side, and brighter side, of the picture is Richard Carlson and what he represents, loving the young girl, refusing to tell her what to think but always on hand to help and back her up. There's a rumor these two young people are to be carried on into another picture. It could be a good picture—but Lillian Hellman ought to have a hand in writing it, and certainly William Wyler should direct it.

J. S. H.

All That Money Can Buy

Adapted by Dan Theroah and Stephen Vincent Benet from Benet's story "The Devil and Daniel Webster," directed by William Dieterle, photographed by Joseph August, music by Bernard Herrman. Produced and distributed by RKO-Radio.

Daniel Webster	Edward Arnold
Mr. Scratch	Walter Huston
Jabez Stone	James Craig
Ma Stone	Jane Darwell
Mary Stone	Anne Shirley
Belle	Simone Simon
Miser Stevens	John Qualen
Squire Slosson	Gene Lockhart
Justice Hawthorne	H. B. Warner
Daniel Stone	Lindy Wade
Sheriff	Frank Conlan
Cy Bibber	George Cleveland

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET gave a new flavor to the old myth about a man selling his soul to the devil when he re-planted it in New England in his story "The Devil and Daniel Webster." That was a good ringing title that excited curiosity, but now they've made a movie of it they have called it *All That Money Can Buy*, which somehow suggests nothing more myth-like than silk stockings. The picture deserves something much better to attract those who would take pleasure in its peculiar and unusual quality.

The devil, it appears in this tale, spent a good deal of time in New Hampshire back in the 1840's, where he went by the indigenous name of Mr. Scratch. The Old Scratch had his eye on Jabez Stone, and managed to make so many distressing misfortunes happen to him that the young farmer was finally ripe to try anything that would change his luck, even to signing a compact to give up his soul for all that money could buy — for a period of seven years, renewable under certain conditions.

The compact worked, according to its terms, and money brought the young farmer



James Craig and Walter Huston in "All That Money Can Buy"

a great many things he thought he wanted, including a fabulously grandiose mansion and the power of the rich over the poor. It brought something he hadn't foreseen, a cute she-devil from over the mountains who had her own feminine streak of the old nick in her. But it brought no happiness, no peace, and young Stone became the least satisfied as well as the meanest man in the countryside.

Daniel Webster, meanwhile, was becoming more and more one of the great men of the young United States, and held in great honor in New Hampshire. Old Mr. Scratch tried a few wiles on him, but to no satisfactory effect beyond getting him sleepy sometimes with too much Melford rum. Webster had been a great hero to Jabez Stone before the devil came along, and kept in touch with the Stones partly because their little boy was his god-son. So when the seven years were up, and Mr. Scratch brought up the contract with demands for its final fulfillment, to which he added a de-

mand for the little boy, Webster was on hand to make a legal contest of it, before a court and jury made up of some of the choicest spirits among the damned of American history.

Could Daniel Webster, with his oratorical splendor and his fervent belief in America as a free and undivided nation, beat the devil? Of course, and his speech to those unhappy ghosts, stirring memories in them of the more innocent days before their damnation, rings with overtones that mingle significantly with things people are thinking about today.

Fantasy is a tricky thing to handle in the movies, particularly fantasy with such solemn fundamentals as good and evil in their battle for human souls. The Faust theme has inspired some of the greatest geniuses of literature, and Mr. Benet put himself into competition with old masters when he set about adapting it to American soil. It is somewhat astonishing that a movie producer should have thought it a profitable venture to put

upon the screen, and the result, in its moments of highest success, is even more astonishing. The problem of weaving the supernatural into such homely naturalness as an old-fashioned New Hampshire farm-and-village setting is a ticklish one, challenging the belief of audiences and tempting them to the kind of laughter that comes from the shock of surprise and from suddenly being confronted with something their common-sense doesn't instantly accept. One of the triumphs of this film is that the appearance of the devil, recognizable as the spirit of evil and yet with all the outward aspect of a human, if eccentric, being, always slip in naturally, and once that is accomplished the whole foundation for belief is laid. Without that the weird scene where the girl brings her ghostly friends from Over the Mountains to the ball, and dances her eerie death-dance with the village miser, would seem grotesque and meaningless, and the final climax, where the spirits of evil men out of the past troop into the shadowy barn to decide the outcome of the fight between Webster and the devil for Jabez Stone, would have no foundation at all to rest on.

Two actors and the director must be credited with the high-spots of this picture. Walter Huston's devil is an extremely vivid and persuasive combination of Yankee and mediaeval demon — amusing but not to be taken as a joke, sinister but not too horrible. Edward Arnold's Daniel Webster keeps the picture's feet on the ground, giving it a solid basis in American life and creating a portrait, dignified but never pompous, warm and human, of a great American. Jane Darwell is also notable in keeping New Hampshire alive and admirable. Probably no more difficult part has come along in a long time than the young farmer, who turned from such a fine young chap to the meanest of the mean. It needs to get pretty detestable, and yet hold enough sympathy so that you really care whether he goes permanently to the devil or not. James Craig looks the part perfectly, and acts it as well as anyone you could easily imagine. John Qualen makes a memorable sketch of a tortured soul that knows it is lost, and Simone Simon — if you can disassociate her from former parts — is peculiarly right for the disturbing girl from far away.

J. S. H.

Movies During the Dog Days

THE heats of the summer were pleasantly banished from mind with the arrival of several very entertaining film comedies. The most unusual of them was the new Walt Disney opus, *The Reluctant Dragon*. It is a feature-length picture interspersed with cartoons of which the last, based on a fable by Kenneth Grahame, gives the movie its title. Robert Benchley, who pretty well dominates the screen throughout, starts for the Disney studios at the persistent urgings of his wife to sell Mr. Disney the idea of making the tale of *The Reluctant Dragon* into an animated cartoon. There, in attempting to elude the services of a pesky youngster with a travel-catalogue mind, into whose custody he has been placed, Benchley takes refuge in different departments of the home of Mickey Mouse and amuses himself and the audience watching the craftsmen and the artists working the sound effects and the cameras, creating new characters and drawing the plates destined for new films. As a documentation of the almost infinite processes needed to make an animated cartoon the picture is of absorbing interest; but added to that we have Benchley's drollery at its best and some of the wittiest cinema devices to come out of a studio. The first section of the film, for instance, is in black and white, but when Benchley stumbles into the Technicolor workshop the picture turns to color from then on. The film is also the occasion for the debut of several new cartoon characters, among them Casey Jones Junior, a locomotive with a personality, Baby Weems, an infant of staggering cerebral energy, and finally the gallant Sir Giles and the poetic Dragon who abhors cruelty and fighting. The cartoons distributed through the picture are all neatly worked into the framework of Benchley's Odyssey in search of Mr. Disney through the never-never world of the film studio. In the sound recording room we find the technicians dubbing in the toots and whistles and gurgles and grinding brakes as Casey Jones Junior flashes on its journey in a black and white cartoon. Donald Duck instructs Benchley in the art of cartoon walking in the animat-

ing studio; the tale of Baby Weems is told by means of still drawings in the sanctum where ideas are thought up; the drafting studio provides the opportunity for seeing the side-splitting film called "How to Ride a Horse." And when at last Benchley finds Disney in the preview theatre he sees the story he has come to sell already finished and presented in one of the most delightful animated films Disney has made. *The Reluctant Dragon* has almost everything, originality, technical magic, tunefulness, exquisite wit, instruction and beauty, all molded into a joyous, integral work of film art.

The Marx Brothers in what is reported to be their last film tear through the *The Big Store* as detectives hired to protect the life and limbs of a young man who has inherited a half interest in the business. This the manager of the store is determined to get for himself. The villain of the piece suffers the appalling fate of being sleuthed after by the mad trio, not to mention the shattered nerves of everyone else in the cast who crosses their path. There is a very tricky scene exploiting Harpo's musicianship. Dressed in bob-wig and brocaded coat in a mirrored rococo room he plays a string trio all by himself, the different instruments being used by his several supposed reflections. The brothers have added nothing new to their bag of tricks but they seem to have augmented the old standbys and bring them all to a mighty conclusion in the chase through the store via chandeliers, roller-skates and single wheel bicycles. The film is no Marx masterpiece but it packs plenty of laughs.

Fantasy is admirably used in three other comedies, *All That Money Can Buy*, (which is treated at length elsewhere in this magazine), *Tom, Dick and Harry* and *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*. *Tom, Dick and Harry* is a sparkling bauble for Ginger Rogers to display her dexterity with, abetted by the solid talent of George Murphy and Burgess Meredith. The plot is of the wispiest, consisting of the problem that faces a lass confronted with proposals from three gentlemen whose respective virtues are dependability, wealth, and joyous recklessness. The novelty is the presentation of wedded life with each of the men in dream sequences which are

excellent in both sets and satire, although after one has seen a couple of them he may realize there can be too much of a good thing. Thanks to fine direction and the superb skill of the cast—Miss Rogers certainly loses no prestige as a splendid actress in this movie—all the pitfalls that threaten a film of this kind are adroitly avoided.

Here Comes Mr. Jordan uses a supernatural turn as part of its plot. The film is rich in humor, poignancy and a fine array of talent in all departments. Robert Montgomery does a bang-up job playing the part of a prize-fighter of promise (his body was in the "pink" as he never tires of pointing out after his demise) who falls in a plane crash and finds himself on his way to the next world because the collector of souls in his territory, a tyro at the job, has gathered his soul to Abraham's bosom fifty years too soon. When it transpires that the original Montgomery remains have been cremated before he can get back, Mr. Jordan, the heavenly supervisor of all this soul garnering (well played by Claude Rains) tries desperately to make things right by getting the pug another body, to be vacated by a gentleman whose time has come, in which to spend his remaining half century. The hunt for the satisfactory corpus and the readjustment of the hero to new situations and old pals provide hilarious moments alternating with passages of depth and emotional potency. This delightful film for all its freshness and apparent effortlessness is a remarkable compound of taste, control and cinematic art which reflects no small glory on Alexander Hall, its director, the star and the rest of the people who made it.

We could hardly have expected a season so fraught with world alarms to get by without a few films inspired by the international situation. Of the better ones the picture most serious in content is *The Story of the Vatican*, an excellent documentary film of six reels made by the March of Time. As an explanation and survey of one of the remaining free and sovereign states in Europe that plays an important part in world diplomacy and international thought, the picture is both timely and absorbing. By means of fine photography and an eloquent narrative by Monsignor Fulton Sheen of

Catholic University, the background, history, points of artistic interest and the current activities of the earth's smallest principality are unfolded in enthralling fashion. The various high personages of the papal household come before the camera's eye as well as the libraries, the galleries, and all the modern departments needed to run the city and care for the perishable treasures that enrich it as a center of learning and culture. Definitely the film has vast value in disseminating a proper picture of a unique monarchy which daily plays an important role in the affairs of war-torn Europe and governs the spiritual life of so many millions of people everywhere.

The best of the out and out propaganda films were *Man Hunt* and *Sergeant York*. *Man Hunt* is the grim story of a British Captain who stalks Adolph Hitler in his Alpine retreat. He gets caught just as he draws a bead on the dictator's breast-bone with a telescopic rifle and his captors demand he sign a confession implicating the British government in the attempted assassination. Since the captain's brother is a high cabinet officer in the government that was trying to keep the peace of Europe the results of such a confession by so highly placed a man would be disastrous. The captain refuses, is tortured, escapes and is the victim of a terrifying man-hunt by the Gestapo through Germany and later England. The fascinating problem of international intrigue and the relentless chase ending in incarceration in a small cave near Lyme Regis in England, based on Geoffrey Household's thriller "Rogue Male," loses much of its original force by being diluted with a love interest written in to supply Joan Bennet with a role as a cockney doxy who hides the captain in her flat and is later murdered by the Gestapo for her complicity. The film was given an expensive production and good actors but the swift terror of the book was watered and slowed down by the director's preoccupation with patent propaganda and the romantic sop that it is felt necessary to throw to the public. The sections of the picture that deal exclusively with the theme of the film are always good and cinematic. It has a splendid opening. And Walter Pidgeon and George Sanders, who are the antagonists, do a fine

job of characterization as the two sportsmen, one thrilled by the chase, the other by the blood, but both ardently devoted to the ideals and the systems that formed them. The other characters were taken out of Hollywood's files marked "Staunch Britishers" and "Brutish Nazis" and disposed in the film like furniture.

Sergeant York spotlights one of the most spectacular American heroes in the first World War. He appears as the symbol and glory of Democratic intrepitude and resourcefulness. Neither talent or money has been spared to make the film a stirring reminder of the national conscience in time of peril. Throughout, there is implied the parallel between the present emergency and the forces that sent our men across the seas in 1917. Gary Cooper as the star gives the film life and coherence in spite of a rather slow and rambling start, fake scenery and an all too obtrusive musical score. The painted drops that appear now and then are the more astonishing when it is realized the large amount of money devoted to the production. But in spite of the faults that may be found with it, from the time York enters the army to the end, the film shakes off its lethargy and becomes quite wonderful in the splendid battle scenes wherein the Sergeant performs his amazing capture of a horde of prisoners. Cooper as the conscience-troubled pacifist from the mountains of Tennessee and finally as the efficient strategist and marksman who is convinced of the rightness of his cause gives an inspired and characteristically expert performance.

Turning from the cosmic dreadfulness of modern fire and sword we have an exceptional film brought over from England devoted to a social crime in Wales. Grim and bitter and beautiful by reason of its theme, its fidelity to human nature and the vast artistry employed in its making, *The Stars Look Down* compels the deepest emotions and a sereing introspection that should be tonic for the general indifference common to most of us. It is an unvarnished and unrelieved parable about a miner and his educated son who fight for the safety of their own people working in coal shafts that are endangered by a nearby body of water. Neither the Union or the owner will admit

that the danger exists, and the men, finally demoralized by want and growing disbelief in the wisdom of their champions, go back to work and destruction when the mine caves in. The story is woven with all the richness of detail and characterization that is peculiar to the best British films and is controlled by a rigid fidelity to theme that admits of no unessential businesses to distract or relieve the over-whelming tragedy brought on by carelessness, deceit, selfishness and self-delusion of men that nothing can purge but blood and tears. There is victory in the film in the midst of the sorrow and the disillusionment, ironic but splendid, as the hero bereft of everything girds himself to the task of drawing good out of the evil both the union and the owner and the confused miners had brought down on each other and themselves. Acting and direction and the other technical crafts have fabricated a film of this splendid story that unerringly draws out of its black pitifulness a rich spiritual beauty.

A. B.

Futures

NOW that summer is on the wane and it is too dark to get in some golf or what-have-you after supper, we will all be turning to the movies and the coming movies promise good entertainment for the months ahead, after reading about some forthcoming releases. Comedies, especially those taken from proven Broadway plays, appear often in the lists, but the producers have everyone in mind and their announcements will include many types of films to suit the many box-office tastes.

On Broadway, Frank Capra is said to be eyeing the sweet old ladies who pass out poison so graciously in "Arsenic and Old Lace," which is a radical shift from his Deeds-Smith-Doe character. Claudette Colbert is to romp through the Gertrude Lawrence role of "Skylark" under Mark Sandrich's direction. Joseph Von Sternberg is directing "Shanghai Gesture" which is long in coming to the films since Florence Reed played it. Bette Davis will switch over to comedy again for "The Man Who Came to Dinner" which will also include Monty Wooley from the Broadway cast. Many of

the musicals, including "Louisiana Purchase," "Panama Hattie," "Lady in the Dark," the old favorites, "Smilin' Through," and "The Chocolate Soldier," and even that madhouse, "Hellzapoppin" have been bought by the movies and are in some stage between footlights and klieg-lights.

King Vidor, who directed *The Citadel* so well, is now working on the film version of John Marquand's "H. M. Pulham, Esq." Vereen Bell's novel, "Swamp Water," will star Walter Huston, will boast a screen adaptation by Dudley Nichols, and will be under the direction of Jean Renoir, the eminent French director of *Grande Illusion*. Much is to be expected of "The Magnificent Ambersons" in spite of the age of the book for, although it won the Pulitzer Prize for Booth Tarkington as long ago as 1919, that dynamo, Orson Welles, is directing and producing it. In light of his *Citizen Kane*, this one will certainly be up-to-the-minute. Then there will be Sam Wood's (*Kitty Foyle* and *The Devil and Miss Jones*) "King's Row" and Cecil B. DeMille's "Reap the Wild Wind."

And the nation still eagerly awaits the new Garbo coiffeur, the Garbo songs, and the Garbo double role in the untitled picture with Melyvn Douglas and Constance Bennett. The production enshrouds itself in mystery, but every little item that slips out about it whets our anxiety so much more. That is just one more reason why the winter movies will be welcome.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, School of Education in cooperation with the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures offers for the 8th year its course on The Motion Picture. Given by well-known lecturers and richly illustrated with interesting and unusual films this course covers the whole field of motion pictures—artistic, technical, educational, and social. It is a practical course for the teacher, social worker, or layman. This year special attention is to be given to the use of films in national defense. The class meets Thursday evenings from 6:15 to 8:00. For complete details write to Professor Frederic M. Thrasher, New York University, Washington Square, New York City.

COMMUNITY NEWS-NOTES

IT has been suggested by several correspondents that Councils might devote some part of their meetings to the reading of these reports for the benefit of those members who may not have access to the Magazine. The suggestion, of course, is seconded by us for we feel that it strengthens the belief in the worthwhileness of the community work to know that others are doing like work, and too new ideas may be gained from the different ways of doing things used by different groups.

THE Cleveland Cinema Club presented its Fourth Annual Motion Picture Festival last May 9th and 10th with splendid support from the community. The morning of the first day was devoted to a symposium on the "Effects of Motion Pictures on Modern Problems" Under the six subjects were discussed — "Effect of *Boystown* on our Youth" by the Cleveland Director of recreation; "Influence of Hollywood on Present Day Styles" by a representative from one of the local department stores; "Films in Visual Education" by a teacher at the John Hay High School; "Motion Pictures and Life" by a feature writer of the Cleveland Plain Dealer; "Importance of Motion Pictures to College Students" by a senior at Flora Stone Mather; "Value of News-reels" by the Manager of the Telenews Theatre. This last subject was illustrated by a ten-minute film *How A News-reel Is Made*.

Then followed a luncheon with three speakers, one of whom was the Division Manager of Loew's Cleveland Theatres, showing again the interest of the theatre men in the Festival. Another was a minister from one of the local churches who stressed the need for escape motion pictures with entertainment values not to be overlooked, and "he complimented the Cinema Club on its attitude toward censorship," writes Mrs. Richard K. Jones president of the Club. In the afternoon there was a showing of the exceptional documentary film *Power and the Land*, a story of the Ohio Parkinsons, made by the U.S. Rural Electrification Administration. Paramount Studio provided a special

preview of *I Wanted Wings* for the evening entertainment. The second day, Saturday, was youth day, on which nine Playlets demonstrating the work of the Cinema Junior Clubs were presented by Club members from the various schools. The Cleveland Public Library arranged a Library Exhibit and time was given by four radio stations for Festival broadcasts.

A summary report on the Springfield (Mass.) Motion Picture Council from its corresponding secretary, Mrs. Wesley K. Simes, interestingly tells of many activities. We quote from it enough to indicate the extent of their work: "Our Council has been organized about ten years. By the spring of 1940 its 115 delegates represented 85 different clubs. The aim of the Council has been to stimulate public support of the best in motion pictures by means of education and information. Toward this end the Council has assisted in the formation of appreciation groups in schools, churches and clubs. We have kept informed of local affairs that concern motion pictures. Many of our members are attending the Film Series, presented by the Springfield Adult Education Council, and we have publicized it through our members and radio broadcasts, believing it to be a worth-while experiment in Adult Visual Education. The Chairman of the Educational Committee, besides keeping close contact with appreciation groups already organized and assisting in the organization of new groups, maintains an extensive information service. This material supplementing that in the local libraries, gives last minute information to those needing it. The Committee publishes each week in the local Sunday paper a list of pictures classified as to suitability.

"The Council keeps informed of legislation which through its effect on the industry affects the theatre patron. It followed the Neely Bill with interest, and sponsored three debate and discussion meetings during which both sides of the argument were presented. Through its Telephone Committee it is possible to contact members on short notice for

special prevues and other matters of importance. Our Contact Committee Chairman, arranges with local managers for prevues whenever possible, and through her efforts and her committee members local theatres cooperate closely with the work of the Council. In a few isolated cases the Council has asked that certain theatre programs be changed and the managers have cheerfully cooperated. Recently there has been little need for censorship locally, and our emphasis has been on boosting the best rather than criticism — and our local situation is as a whole most satisfactory. Our new Radio Chairman is presenting an interesting series of fifteen minute broadcastings during which late releases are reviewed and topics of film interest are discussed. Two different Council members take part each week, and thus the circle of listeners and friends grows. We feel our opportunity for growth and service in these trying times is greater than ever before."

MRS. ARTHUR D. KERWIN, president of the Greater Detroit Motion Picture Council, in writing of one phase of the work of their Council says — "We are progressing nicely with our Cinema Clubs in the schools, and I am happy to report the interest and enthusiasm these young people display in the study of motion picture appreciation."

THERE is increasing interest in the use of the radio for publicizing in the community the work of a Council and it is good to have Mrs. E. H. Kennard, chairman of the Ithaca (N.Y.) Better Films Council report that in her university town they have a five to ten minute broadcast every Tuesday over the local Cornell station.

ONE feature new this year in the meetings of the Community Film Council of Chevy Chase, (Md.) we learn from Mrs. Elmer Stewart, the president, is a Current Events report. Mrs. W.W. Chapin, who was previous president, is the chairman. To provide motion picture items of interest she uses various kinds of material including newspapers, educational and trade journals. When these current events reports were distributed after a meeting there were requests

for more, so it seems to be a good idea put to service. We hear often from those in community work of husband cooperation. Mrs. Stewart's we pass on as helpful. She says—"My husband and I purchased a small mimeograph machine for his Boy Scout and Sunday School work and my movie work." Thus we can see how this material could be distributed at meetings without great cost, just willingness to give the time and effort.

MRS. O. D. BARTLETT has been re-elected president for the fourth year of the Atlanta Better Films Committee. The Committee's present membership numbers 250 men and women active in over 500 civic, religious, educational, welfare, patriotic and study groups throughout the city and surrounding towns. Its object briefly re-stated by Mrs. Bartlett covering numerous activities is to promote clean, stimulating and educational entertainment by building up discriminating audiences and to disseminate information regarding pictures by speakers, telephone, letters and cards, radio (broadcasting every Wednesday night at 7:45 over local station WATL), as well as library, church and school cooperation.

THE Philadelphia Motion Picture Forum holds two large luncheons a year at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. For the 1941 spring luncheon the speakers were Mr. Hal Hode, an executive of Columbia Pictures Corp. talking on "The Movies and Your Children" and Mr. Richard Griffith of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library on "Pictures That Have Been Milestones in Motion Picture Progress." They were introduced by Mrs. Charles T. Owens, Forum president and addressed an audience of several hundred.

TWO Councils in the Metropolitan N.Y. area also had spring luncheons bringing their work before large groups at the season's end. One was the Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn, of which Mrs. Lewis P. Addoms is president. The interest of city officials was shown through the participation in the program of an Associate Superintendent of Schools and a Judge of the Court of Special Sessions. A couple of young screen celebrities provided the glamour

touch. An attractive souvenir folder told of the Council, its organization and purposes.

The other was the Motion Picture Council of Central Queens (Long Island, N.Y.). This group came into New York City meeting at a hotel on 45th, a leading theatre street. Representatives of motion picture companies and national organizations were guests. Mr. Harold Janecky, New York District Manager of the Skouras Theatres Corporation, praised Councils for their constructive community work and told of the exhibits currently appearing in the lobbies of Skouras Theatres in connection with their good-neighbor campaign. Here's an idea worth cooperating with if undertaken by theatres in other communities, perhaps even of suggesting. Mrs. Dean Gray Edwards, president of this Council, was mentioned in the May issue of the Magazine as author of "Hand-book for Previewers."

IT is good to pass a job well done on to a successor and that is what Mrs. Elmer J. Giesen, retiring from the Better Films chairmanship of the the Drama Club of Evanston, (Ill.) is doing when she writes—"Having done this work for the past two years, and having instigated the movie estimates in our weekly periodical, it is with keen regret that I am giving it up, but I do feel I have done my duty, and someone else should be enjoying the work, and it is enjoyable to know our movie estimates are read by the mothers and children before they attend the picture theatres in Evanston."

A splendid kind of cooperative activity is reported by Mrs. Elmore Godfrey, Jr. President of the Knoxville Motion Picture Council when she writes—"Our Council has a membership in the Knoxville-Knox County Adult Education Council and is participating in public forums conducted by that Council on topics of interest to our community."

MRS. A. J. SALEEBY as Motion Picture Chairman of the Vermont Federation of Women's Clubs, at the annual convention, May 27th—29th, prepared a table of helpful literature on motion picture study

for display and distribution. She felt that it was worthwhile to do this as there had been a great deal of interest in such material the year before, with the table emptied and indication throughout the year that it had been put to use. Speaking of her own community, Johnson, Vermont, she says—"The membership of our Women's Club is made up of representative women—many of them members of the faculty of the Normal School or former teachers. As a town we are movie-conscious and have opportunity to see the newest and best pictures."

MRS. HOWARD S. SHEPARD, President of the Worcester (Mass.) Better Films Council, like many other club leaders finds hers a year-around job. She writes that the Movie Digest appearing in two Worcester papers each week is a compilation of the opinions of those who have previewed. It requires about three hours of work each week and is continued throughout the year with no time out for vacation.

MRS. W. G. KERR, Motion Picture Chairman of the Allegheny County (Pa.) Federation of Women's Clubs, writes—"Our list is used in the Pittsburgh Press and I prepare a little list of titles that I give to our members. Of course it lacks all descriptive material, but I feel that it takes up less time at the meeting than reading a list would, and too the women like it." She further writes—"I am happy that you are listing the starred pictures first in your Magazine and Guide, it simplifies the work as you can readily see. I ask the women to at least read the ones with the stars at their regular club meetings."

IT might be worthwhile for Councils to consider extending their motion picture appreciation to groups not likely to be reached through the various organizations represented in the Council or through the schools, where so many Councils are now exerting their influence and efforts.

This thought is prompted at this time by a letter from Miss Kathleen Crowley, Director of the Waterbury (Conn.) Girls' Club, and a member of the National Advisory Council

of the Board. Her letter contains comments made by the girls to some of the teachers when asked to record their judgments on pictures. The majority of these girls work in the factories. Here are a half dozen from those in the sewing classes: "I don't have time to go to the movies"—"I go when I haven't anything else to do"—"Let me see, I know I saw several good movies but I can't remember the names"—"I don't care to go to the movies"—"I like them but I soon forget them"—"I stayed to see *The Philadelphia Story* twice because I liked the fashions in it and I noticed more details the second time." As this is followed up the responses to come will doubtless show more discernment. Wider questioning into the why and what of movie going among groups of this kind with some thoughtful leadership would add up to finer audiences.

"THIS has been the first year of a Motion Picture Committee in the Montpelier (Vt.) Woman's Club," writes Mrs. Perley P. Pitkin, chairman, "and I have had to go rather slowly, as it was all experimental. I really feel I have made a step in the right direction, as both theatre managers and club members are pleased. I have already asked our theatre manager to speak at our High School assembly on some

of the ideas he would like to get across. He hasn't said no!"

SOME visitors from motion picture groups to the National Board of Review this summer were: Mrs. A. F. Burt, Honorary President of the Better Films Council of Greater St. Louis; Mrs. C. M. Beecher, member of the Columbus Motion Picture Council; Mrs. James A. Craig, founder of the Jacksonville Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Will Prichett, Treasurer of the Knoxville Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Charles T. Owens, President, Mrs. B. H. Poucher, 2nd Vice president, Mrs. Thomas H. Johnston, Program Chairman, of the Philadelphia Motion Picture Forum; Mrs. H. Ulrich of the Rochester Better Film Council; Mrs. Mina C. Brann, of Cabin John, Maryland; Mrs. Charles Fox Long, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. There were not so many vacationers New York way this summer, with the World's Fair of 1939 and 1940 no more. We are happy at all times to welcome Council members when they come to New York, to talk with them and have them take part in the work of the Board.

SEE page 27 for the announcement of two new lists.

18th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW

Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, November 13th to 15th, 1941

THIS conference commemorates the 25th year of organized community work in connection with motion pictures, begun by the Board in 1916, which should give it a special interest to those of our readers who have been doing this work as leaders and associates. We hope many of you will be here so that you can join in recalling what has been done in the past and in consulting together about what ought to be and can be done in the future. A quarter of a century

has proved the value of this work and the need for its continuance and further growth.

There will be, as usual, talks on subjects of current interest related to the motion picture, film showings, and a luncheon with notable figures from the movie world as guests, but for those who are active in the Councils we put particular emphasis on the community work, and we trust that a large number of you are already making plans for being in New York in the coming mid-November.

JUNIOR INTERESTS

Welcome to the Juniors

THE National Board's purpose of unifying an intelligent citizen opinion on films, and helping this attitude to register at the box-offices of the country, and of raising the general critical standards of the public, has naturally looked a lot toward the fertile ground of educational institutions. The Board has always sought to cooperate with schools in every way possible, and in 1931 it began its meetings of the Young Reviewers, which gave typical school students in and around New York an opportunity to voice their feelings about individual films, feelings which have been followed by many of our readers with great interest. Soon after, it was found that many schools, libraries and community centers were forming clubs for the study of motion pictures, each one having different ways of functioning perhaps, but each being unified by a common purpose. The Board therefore brought them together under the banner of the National Association of 4-Star Clubs and has served as a source of information and clearing-house for suggestions since then. The association began its own official publication, the "4-Star Final," held an annual conference of its own as well as participating in the Board's annual conference, and sponsored contests among its membership which furthered the aims of the Board as well as the individual clubs. The Board has been proud of its growing junior membership, and, with this issue, is giving it a regular department in the Magazine wherein its activities and opinions may be reported upon and which will replace the "4-Star Final."

It has been found that the tastes of the students coincided with the adult tastes of the Review Committee so closely that the reviews of films printed in the "4-Star Final" had the same points of departure as were represented in our Magazine. At the same time, the student activities are of considerable interest to all of our subscribers who work with local Motion Picture Councils or who are actively or passively following the relations of the

movies with the younger generation. For these reasons, it should be advantageous to all to have the "4-Star Final" incorporate itself with the Magazine as an operating department. Welcome, then, to the Juniors!

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IN this initial appearance of the department, it would be well to give a brief outline of the growth and operation of these clubs, so that our readers may be fully acquainted with the background of the new department.

They are a spontaneous growth out of the student body, in answer to the students' desire to learn more about films. They are self-governing although generally having some adult serve in an advisory capacity, and attempt either to make their own films which will be of especial use to the school, or to study the commercial movies with their own eyes, writing and publishing their own criticism, advertising the worthwhile features playing in their neighborhood, and studying the branches of film production as carried on in Hollywood in order to better equip themselves to judge films. In every case, the purpose of the clubs is to work for the improvement of pictures by patronizing only the better pictures, thereby making their opinion felt at the box-office, the most vulnerable sense-organ of the producers. In this way, the clubs are closely linked with other branches of the Board's work.

The students also make an effort to link movies with their courses of study, tracing out the effect of movies on various phases of civic life, learning from educative properties which are inherent in many commercial films, as well as promoting the use of non-entertainment films in the schools as instruments of visual instruction. Typical samples of their work will be found in the speeches given at the last conference which are printed below.

This newly formed junior department of the Magazine will inevitably bring in material pertaining to junior criticism of current films, which is of great interest to all movie-goers. It would therefore seem logical from

time to time, to report on the activities of the Young Reviewers, the Board's group of children, aged 8 to 14, who preview a film about every ten days during the winter and register their opinions on ballots as well as in a general discussion which is led by one of their own members. This group already has a backlog of experience in judging films which commands the respect of all. Certain trends appear in their reactions to films, but they also make unlooked-for remarks in certain instances which reveal much about their viewpoint which adult critics may fail to appreciate. The new department will therefore record their opinion when it is of sufficient interest, and will welcome any relevant material on children's criticism which any of the Magazine's readers care to submit.

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Two 4-Star Club Contests

Sixth Annual

"MAKE YOUR OWN MOVIES CONTEST"

ANY film made during the scholastic year of 1941-42 by a club affiliated with the National Association of 4-Star Clubs is eligible for entry in the contest.

There will be a first award of a silver engraved cup, and honorable mention.

The closing date of the contest shall be April 15, 1942, on which day all entries must be in the office of the National Board of Review.

The winning entries will be shown at the Annual Spring Conference of the 4-Star Clubs in New York City.

"Film Review Contest"

ANY 4-Star Club member can submit one or more reviews of any film or films he or she sees, from now until the end of the scholastic year.

As soon as a review is written, it should be sent to the office of the National Board of Review.

The best reviews will be printed in the Magazine and copies will be sent to the authors of the published reviews.

At the end of the scholastic year, in May 1942, a cash prize will be awarded to the member who submitted the best review of all.

4-Star Club Conference

THE following talks were presented by school representatives at the Fifth Annual Spring Conference of 4-Star Clubs,, held at New York University on May 24th, 1941. They should provide helpful suggestions to similar groups as well as be of interest to older readers of the magazine.

"MOVIES FOR ENJOYMENT"

by Paul Garrett, Jr.

White Plains (N. Y.) High School
Motion Picture Club

THIS winter the Motion Picture Club of the White Plains Senior High School has been presenting a series of short features during the lunch group periods. Everybody in our high school has a 25-minute respite before or after lunch. During the winter we must sit in the auditorium doing nothing. Our school of more than 2,000 is too crowded; there is not any free room large enough to allow any activity to go on during lunch group periods, not even gyms. Thus we sit in the dreary auditorium for almost half an hour. To help make the time go faster, the Motion Picture Club thought of showing short features. These were all varieties—March of Time, popular swing bands, comedies, spotlights, cartoons and travelogues.

This is the way we attacked the problem. We obtained a few dollars from the General Organization so we could rent five shorts. One week we presented them to the students and they were received so very well that we went ahead and worked out this plan. During a regular assembly we showed a full feature film, *If I Were King*. We charged ten cents admission to anyone who wanted to come. It was made extremely clear that all money raised at this program would go to rent lunch-group pictures for the remaining winter season. We took in \$97.05. This sum was more than adequate.

Many teachers told us how the movies seemed to quiet the students down for the afternoon classes. The cafeteria director said that the table manners improved. We students liked them for they broke up the regularity of the school day. Sometimes, in a pleasant way, we learned something as in the March of Time pictures, travelogues or

sports, and even in the musicals. Our idea was to show only the best movies.

After Easter vacation, the weather permitted us to enjoy the fresh air out-of-doors on the campus—so ended our movies until next October.

To see what the students wanted for next year, we distributed questionnaires to everyone and obtained some very interesting answers. Every teacher was also asked to fill one out. Of the 85 teachers, only six said positively no. I will quote two of them: "Must we entertain the students? Is it too much to ask them to sit without entertainment for 25 minutes? What educational or even cultural value do films have?" Every teacher has at least one free period every day as well as before and after school. But some still feel slighted. "The only free minutes in the whole school that I have for relaxation. Must I give it up for some outrageous cartoon?"

We also found there was a solid block of one department opposed to the idea. What department was it?—the Latin Department.

The principal of our high school and the General Organization have asked us to take complete charge of the noon hour program next fall. I would like to give you some inside advice. Before you start, be sure you want it for there is plenty of work in producing a satisfactory program, for we already had the experience.

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"THE HIGH SCHOOL FILMS FOR DEMOCRACY"

by Tina De Rose

East Side High School Photo Patrons Club,
Newark, N. J. (This club won the 1941
Make Your Own Movies Contest.)

WE, the Photo Patrons of East Side High School, were indeed flattered when selected by the Junior Red Cross as a typical American high school. We made a film for them, ran a show, and made enough money to donate this film outright to the Red Cross. We feel now that the film was a good picture for Democracy, since it shows the workings of Democracy in an American high school.

Unfortunately, due to conditions abroad, the Junior Red Cross was unable to fulfill their intentions of showing the film in various

European countries. Nevertheless, the film was a great success wherever shown. The Red Cross expects to send it throughout the Americas.

Inspired and confident because of the success of our first offering on Democracy, we immediately began contemplating a plot for a second one. Desiring an appropriate story and one of general interest, we unhesitatingly chose the present European situation as a background. We made a film showing conditions abroad under a dictatorship contrasting with life under a democracy as they are in America. There is also a love affair woven through the entire plot. We tried to stress that Democracy is the best form of government, and we hope that we have succeeded. We also made recordings of the characters speaking, with music for the background, to suit the various scenes.

After five months of hard thinking and enjoyable work with wholehearted cooperation from all, we finally emerged with a satisfactory plot and shooting script. Immediately we were confronted with the production of this film. It took a great deal of courage and firm determination to overcome the various obstacles that arose.

This morning we are very pleased to show you the film that secured us first prize: the Red Cross film, *Our High School*. We hope to show you our film on Democracy at the next Conference.

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"THE EFFECT OF MOVIES ON AMERICAN LIFE"

by Vivian Berlin

St. Mary's Park Movie Review Club
New York City

THE movies play an important part in our daily life. This is shown in many different ways: by our clothes, homes, and ideas in general. Its thoughts and examples all tend to permeate the minds of the people. The movies are one of the most popular forms of entertainment, thus wielding a great deal of influence. The children today are almost as movie-educated as school-educated.

Our fashion trends are affected by the movies. We all rush to our favorite bargain counters, soon after a new picture is released,

to buy all sorts of Hollywood-named objects, from hairnets to the last form of wearing apparel. As soon as *Gone With the Wind* was released, most of the girls were seen wearing the Scarlett O'Hara dresses. The Juliet caps were also made popular through the movies. Interior decoration also changes from time to time due to the movies, because we all like to model our homes after those of the famous movie stars or after a room we have seen in the films.

The movies can also be a source of education in the fact that they can leave us with some very valuable knowledge. The travelogues acquaint us with many different lands, thus enabling a better understanding of each other's problems. The picture *The Land of Liberty* is an excellent example because it takes in the history and the development of the United States from the original thirteen colonies until our present-day form of living and governing. It also shows us how we overcame our struggles and obstacles until we made a "more perfect union."

The films, if handled by the right people, can be a great aid to our government. They can show our people all the resources and excellent living conditions plus other benefits that we have, thus uniting the people for a common cause.

We all know that, as yet, the movies have not been perfected, but we can try to do all in our power to see that the caliber of the films do not go down. It is, therefore, up to organizations such as ours, the National Board of Review, to see that the movies be jealously and zealously guarded.

"OUR MOVIE PROJECT"

by Allen Boornstein

Manhasset (N. Y.) High School
Cinema Club

IN our school all motion picture work is divided into two different and separate groups: first, the Audio-Visual Aids Department which takes care of the showing of films, and second, the Cinema Club which takes care of the making of motion pictures. Let us first take up the Audio-Visual Aids Department.

It is composed of eight or ten well trained sound and silent operators with assistants for heavy work. The purpose is to integrate

films, sound and silent, into classroom work. To do this, we are now starting for next year, by getting up a tentative schedule which will be added to and changed as the year progresses, by the booking and operator students. Just before a film arrives, it is scheduled, period by period, by teachers and it is previewed upon arrival. The teachers are notified where showings are to be. The booking manager sees that a projector and operator are there at the proper time. Before returning the film, a teacher fills out our own evaluation form which is filed with us and which is also returned with the film to the lending library.

This year the Visual Aids has shown very close to a million feet of film in the four schools in our area, all of it educational and 95% of it in the classroom, the rest being used in various assemblies. Well over 80% of this is sound. All this film is handled by our small group from the high school in their headquarters and in the projection room. The Visual Aids is now a part of the school curriculum and it is the students' belief that this new method of teaching is far superior to any old-fashioned methods.

The Cinema Club this year has taken some very interesting movies. The first in this series is entitled *Preparing a Dinner*. It is an indoor-Kodachrome 16mm film showing the Chefs Club preparing dinner all by themselves which would be given to the faculty. It was made under great strain as we had to take it all in the same afternoon and still not hinder the industrious chefs.

The second film we have made in the past month was a long review of the activities of one of the grade schools in our area. We chose a student there and asked her to act as a new pupil, and we followed her around until she became part of the school itself. The last of the films that we have taken was that of a parade of students from our school to a local theatre to see several patriotic shorts that may be had only in 35mm. These movies resulted in a worthwhile investment to the school board and a great many good times to the photographers.

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Other talks at the Junior Conference will be published in the next issue of the Magazine.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

- f *MAIL TRAIN**—Gordon Harker, Alistair Sim. Based on the character created by Hans W. Priwin. Directed by Walter Forde. A swell detective story, spoils a bit by being too long and not very neat in structure, but beautifully acted and chock-full of good gags and excellent suspense. The story is built around hunting down fifth columnists in England. All the technical and artistic devices far and away make up for story defects. (British production) 20th Century-Fox.
- m *MAJOR BARBARA** — Wendy Hiller, Rex Harrison, Robert Morley, Robert Newton. Based on the play by George Bernard Shaw. Directed by Gabriel Pascal. Mr. Shaw's word-witty movie version of his play is something of a stunner. The sardonic sentiments of this early twentieth century work have been refurbished and brought up-to-date to a remarkable degree. Unfortunately the brilliant strands of thinking proposed at the start of the film get so snarled up in the conclusion as to leave the thing somewhat meaningless. It is very talky as one would expect, but the people who do the talking, including some of the most distinguished British actors and actresses, are so expert in their readings as to make the rather un-cinematic element very attractive. Nothing seems to have been spared to make the film sumptuous. Direction, acting sets, photography and music are all top notch. The picture doesn't hang together very well; that and its stage play earmarks are the chief defects. Sections, however, especially those scenes in the Salvation Army place are brilliant in their irony and very moving. United Artists.
- f *MAN HUNT**—Walter Pidgeon, Joan Bennett, George Sanders. Based on the novel "Rogue Male" by Geoffrey Household. Directed by Fritz Lang. An exciting and absorbing film of the hunt through Germany and around England by the Gestapo for an English captain who attempted to kill Hitler with a telescopic lensed gun. The feeling of the picture is realistic but the horror is more implied than explicit. The romantic element does not interfere with the splendid pace and suspense of the story and quite enhances it. Fancy propaganda woven into a fine tale, well acted and directed and handsomely mounted. 20th Century-Fox.
- f *MOON OVER MIAMI** — Betty Grable, Don Ameche, Robert Cummings. Based on a play by Stephen Powys. Directed by Walter Lang. This is a bright and tuneful musical showing how two hash-slingers can invest a few thousand in clothes and a suite in Miami and nab off a couple of idle rich playboys. Having hit upon a successful formula for these Technicolor musicals, the boys and girls involved repeat their performances; but it is always entertaining to watch and hear. Song and dance numbers are good and the color is poured onto the sights of Miami and its environs in huge quantities to furnish the background for the charms of the two blondes. 20th Century-Fox.
- f *PARACHUTE BATTALION**—Robert Preston, Nancy Kelly, Edmond O'Brien, Harry Carey. Original screen story by John Twist and Major Fite. Directed by Leslie Goodwins. An excellent documentation of the training of parachute troops at Fort Benning with a pleasant romance of no great strength or novelty woven in. Focus is placed as per formula on a good natured hillbilly, a wealthy all-American playboy and a serious but frightened youth who is also the son of the commanding officer. He turns out to be quite a hero under the gruff tutelage of Mr. Carey and wins the girl. A generous share of the footage is devoted to chute maneuvers and the training of the men. These sequences are remarkable not only for interest but for fine photography. The burden of the comedy falls to Buddy Ebsen who carries it amusingly and unobtrusively. Among the pictures made lately devoted to various arms of the service this film is among the best technically and for its interest. The Troops at the Georgia Fort are responsible for the actual tactics demonstrated. RKO Radio.
- fj *RELUCTANT DRAGON, THE** — Robert Benchley. Based on the story by Kenneth Grahame. Directed by Alfred Werker. You follow Robert Benchley through Walt Disney's studio and strange you are if you don't have a wonderful time. Benchley's delightful amiability and the wonder-workers of the Disney work-shop enthrall and instruct and end up showing the film that gives the picture its name. Banal as it may sound, this is one of the most entertaining products of Disney's genius; I'm tempted to say it's the best thing he's done. Recommended for schools and libraries. RKO Radio.
- f *RUGGLES OF RED GAP**—Charles Ruggles, Charles Laughton, Mary Boland. Based on the novel by Harry Leon Wilson. Directed by Leo McCarey. This is a re-issue of the film made in 1936 and has lost none of the charm and sentiment and characterizations that made it so popular then. It's the story of a man who, reared in a tradition of servitude, found himself equal to any in the wilds of early Twentieth Century Washington state. The picture is a fine example of direction and acting, provided with humor and a wholesome democratic spirit which latter may be thought timely. Paramount.
- f *SERGEANT YORK** — Gary Cooper, Joan Leslie, Walter Brennan. Based on the biography by Tom Skeyhill. Directed by Howard Hawks. A well made hero story dramatizing the spiritual experiences and the military valor of a Tennessee mountaineer in the World War I. Neither money nor talent has been spared to make the film a stirring reminder of the national conscience and American intrepidity when faced with the terror of war. Curiously enough for an obviously top flight picture the producer did not scruple to use a number of patently painted scenes and the musical motifs, effective for a while, he allowed to become too blatant. A great deal of footage is devoted to the formative years of Sergeant York, following his development from a gayly violent young man through conversion and

pacifism to his induction into the army. But the scenes in France, particularly the battle sequences, are splendid and are beautifully wrought by the director and the star. The role of Sergeant York is one of the best Cooper has had and needless to say he plays it for all its worth. Definitely the film is one of the best of its genre to come out of Hollywood since the war. Warner Bros.

m ***SHINING VICTORY** — James Stephenson, Geraldine Fitzgerald. Based on a play by A. J. Cronin. Directed by Irving Rapper. Mr. Cronin's drama is a taut love story ending in shattering tragedy, set against a background of an insane hospital's research into bio-chemical cures for mental diseases. Mr. Stephenson is the research doctor so absorbed by his work that he denies love utterly until his investigation is complete, at which time his personal victory is brutally torn from him by the tragic death of his fiancée. The acting is sternly convincing, his in particular, and the direction is sharp and incisive without resorting to melodramatics. Results: a finely executed drama. Warner Bros.

f ***STARS LOOK DOWN, THE** — Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood, Emyln Williams. Based on the novel by A. J. Cronin. Directed by Carol Reed. This is an unrelieved British-made drama of Welsh coal mining involving the clash of an idealistic miner's son with the ethics of his fellow-miners and his employer. His reward for high ideals only comes ironically after a tragic mine disaster when the walls of the mine finally yield to the force of a near body of water. This is stern stuff taken from the most bitter realities. Fortunately the excellence of the acting, direction and the background do not let down for a moment, making for a splendid union of good documentary with tense entertainment. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f ***SUNNY**—Ray Bolger, Anna Neagle. Based on the play by Harbach and Hammerstein; music by Jerome Kern. Directed by Herbert Wilcox. A gay and tuneful remake of the musical stage play and film that starred Marilyn Miller. The locale is New Orleans at Mardi Gras where a rich young man and a dancing girl meet and fall in love. The drama hinges on the trouble rising out of their different social positions, but love has its way and all ends happily. The music and the dance routines are always good, particularly Ray Bolger's numbers; the same can fairly be said of the comedy, especially a dance by the Hartmans to a tune made up of "Who", and Ravel's Bolero. All told the film is light and makes delightful entertainment. RKO Radio.

f ***TOM, DICK AND HARRY**—Ginger Rogers, Burgess Meredith, George Murphy. Original story by Jaul Jarrico. Directed by Garson Kanin. The title indicates the plot pretty much. Ginger has love-dust in her eyes and clouds on her brain as she works out her proposal problems, and she is convincing as ever. But the outstanding quality of the film is from its direction which is full of delightful surprises. Mr. Kanin again exhibits his in-

genuity in making the camera and what it picks up always witty and unexpected. A cracker-jack comedy, this. RKO Radio.

f ***UNDERGROUND** — Philip Dorn, Karen Verne, Mona Maris. Original screen story by Edwin Justus Mayer and Oliver H. P. Garrett. Directed by Vincent Sherman. In fairly realistic terms this film tells the heroic story of the men and women who operate an illegal radio in Germany much to the annoyance of the Gestapo. The parts are played with the style and efficiency we have come to expect when Hollywood sets its hand to presenting Nazis and the men in the Reich who are attempting by such means as they have to return their country to the family of civilized Western nations. Given a good production and excellent actors and the burning if somewhat familiar story to us now, the picture provides thrills, pathos and tragedy in a very effective way. Warner Bros.

f ***VOICE IN THE NIGHT**, A—Clive Brook, Diana Wynyard. Based on a story by Wolfgang Wilhelm and George Cambell. Directed by Anthony Asquith. A vivid and terrifying picture of Germany under the Gestapo and of the efforts of a high official in the Reich to convert the people from their approaching dehumanization by telling them the truth over a short wave radio transmitter. The hunt for the station gives the film most of its pace and suspense. Cast, direction and sets, all are first rate, and for a film of this type most tastefully underplayed. (British Production) Columbia.

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE SUMMER

fj **ADVENTURE IN WASHINGTON** — Herbert Marshall, Virginia Bruce, Gene Reynolds. Original screen story by Jeanne Spencer and Albert Benham. Directed by Alfred E. Green. The trials and tribulations of a young roughneck who has been imported into the Capital as a Senate page boy because his father, a former political boss, gave a senator his start in politics. Because of an unjust ruling on himself, the boy sells some knowledge of an important bill to a lobbyist but later repenting helps to clear up the matter. Old formula, with lots of sentiment and fair acting and direction. Columbia.

f **BAD MEN OF MISSOURI**—Dennis Morgan, Jane Wyman, Wayne Morris, Arthur Kennedy. Based on the story by Robert E. Kent. Directed by Ray Enright. Whether fabricated of legend or history or a compound of both, this film has what it takes to capture your sympathies and hold your interest to the end. Released from the army after the Civil War the three Younger brother return to their home in Missouri only to find their farm and those of their friends confiscated for taxes at the hands of ruthless carpetbaggers. Turning outlaw the three boys play the Robin Hood game of supplying the farmers with stolen money to pay the taxes on their imperiled homes. The movie has the pace and suspense of a good western, and for all the gunplay and legal

outrage it has a happy ending too. The Younger boys were well played by the stars and the supporting cast abetted them well in maintaining the stress and atmosphere of the story. Warner Bros.

f BARNACLE BILL—Wallace Beery, Marjorie Main. Based on an original screen story by Jack Jevne. Directed by Richard Thorpe. This continues the "Tugboat Annie" cycle save for the substitution of Marjorie Main. Again Wallace Beery is the shiftless captain of a run-down boat and again he finds rest broken by occasional jaunts to the local bar as the best recipe of life until Marjorie and Virginia Weidler take him in hand. There is lots of honest water and scenes of tuna fishing which keep the interest up in a pretty long picture. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f BEYOND THE LAW — William Gargan, June Clyde. Original screen story and direction by George Waggner. It's all about the troubles the FBI has when it locks up a man who looks like a famous criminal and, finding it out, tries to rectify its mistake. Mr. Gargan makes a good federal detective in this smooth thriller. Nothing new has been added to the literature of the sleuth film, but this opus keeps your interest and hands out sufficient suspense to please any audience out after a bit of relaxation. Universal.

f BIG STORE, THE — The Marx Brothers, Tony Martin. Original screen story by Nat Perrin. Directed by Charles Riesner. Lovers of the Marx Brothers' unique brand of humor may unite and laugh their lungs out as Groucho, Chico and Harpo pretend being bodyguards to a young singer who has inadvertently inherited a half-interest in a department store which his co-owner covets completely. Harpo joins Chico at the piano as well as performing at his own harp, and everyone indulges in the wildest of finales with roller-skates, bikes and even a speeded camera to contribute to the hilarity. It's not very different from their previous escapades but will satisfy the Marx following. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f BILLY THE KID — Robert Taylor, Brian Donlevy, Ian Hunter. Suggested by the book "The Saga of Billy the Kid" by Walter Noble Burns. Directed by David Miller. Billy in the handsome person of Robert Taylor is a brave, dexterous (really he is left handed) wrong-headed youngster with a rugged code and a fabulous shooting ability. He is lured out of his gun-against-world ethics by a reformed old friend and a ranching gentleman and turns to cow punching. When the gang of crooks kills his benefactor, however, he reverts to his old ways and executes the culprits. The film is apt to be slow and the writing not so very sparkling, but the color is often very handsome and there are sequences such as the gathering of the posse that have fine scope and movement. The scenery of the desert dotted with mesas and cacti is breathtaking in its beauty. Humor and romance of the amorous kind play very slightly in this grim saga of the West on the last lap of its journey towards civilization and peace. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f BLONDIE IN SOCIETY—Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake. Original screen story by Eleanor Griffin. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. One of the most amusing films of the series. The domestic troubles of Blondie are very aggravated by her husband's bringing home a Great Dane in exchange for a fifty dollar loan he has made to a kennel owner. The picture has all the advantages of a good production and a fine cast and keeps you in a merry mood throughout. The dog-show sequence will please people who like to look at handsome specimens of various breeds. Columbia.

f BLYGE ANTON (Bashful Anton)—Edvard Persson. Manuscript by Ted Berthels and Henry Richter. Directed by Emil A. Pehrsson. Swedish dialogue. Anton is a very genial, middle-aged comic who is driven to a neat crime to obtain the raise he needs to marry. Incidentally he straightens the problems of all the other underlings in the office and complete happiness results. The comedy is joyful and the music pleasing although a few more subtitles would help. Mr. Persson is beautifully expressive with each of his many pounds. (Swedish production — English sub-titles) Scandia Film, Inc.

f BRIDE CAME C.O.D., THE — Bette Davis, James Cagney. Original screen story by Kenneth Earl and M. M. Musselman. Directed by William Keighley. A farce with a fair amount of good gags, routine acting by a fine cast, and as good direction as so tried a tale could manage. Miss Davis took some very rough handling on her jaunt to get married; Cagney of course handed most of it out to her. The general effect is a lively series of inanities that are often well worth a laugh. Warner Bros.

f BROADWAY LIMITED—Victor McLaglan, Marjorie Woodworth, Dennis O'Keefe. Original screen story by Rian James. Directed by Gordon Douglas. A baby adopted at short notice by a film actress as a publicity stunt turns out to be a kidnapped child with the police of the nation hunting it high and low. When the truth transpires, the film star's party on board the Broadway Limited bound for New York is thrown into a panic that provides most of the comedy. The stars do well by a stilted and well-worn script, with not too much help from the director. The baby will charm people who like babies and some of the gags are very funny. It's enjoyable but won't make history. United Artists.

f CAUGHT IN THE DRAFT — Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour. Original screen story by Harry Tugend. Directed by David Butler. It's a comedy and you get some laughs, (Bob Hope can be very amusing) but as a piece of writing and a line of gags one could hope it had a little more ginger and a good deal more wittiness. The tale hangs on the aversion to noise of a popular movie star who, in attempting to impress his girl with a phony enlistment into the new army, actually joins up because his strategy hits a snag. The rest is of didoes in the camp where after much difficulty he becomes a corporal and marries the young woman. Paramount.

- f DANCE HALL—Cesar Romero, Carole Landis, J. Edward Bromberg. Based on the novel "Giant Swing" by W. R. Burnett. Directed by Irving Pichel. A dance-hall manager and his star squabble through to a marriage ending, with a sympathetic 'lawyer' salesman on the side-lines. Cracky dialogue, some songs and plenty of comedy—the biggest laughs furnished by a pair of silent extras. 20th Century-Fox.
- f DEAD MEN'S SHOES—Leslie Banks, Wilfred Lawson, Judy Kelley. Original screen story by Hans Kafka and S. Jarvis. Directed by Joseph Bentley. This is a polite English thriller of mental anguish. A prominent businessman is accused of being someone else and, in the course of a court trial, he learns that he was a criminal before the war but, after complete amnesia, he is re-educated as the businessman. He is only forced to annihilate the older-self definitely when the criminal propensity appears in his son. The ending is rather contrived but satisfactory. The picture is well presented and keeps one guessing in the style of other English productions. Monogram.
- f DESERT BANDIT—Don "Red" Barry, Lynn Merrick. Original screen story by Bennett Cohen. Directed by George Sherman. This is an action western covering the heroics of the Texas Rangers, with Don regaining his high favor with them after being thrown out on a misunderstanding. He gets right in with the law-breaking gang only to double-cross them and turn them over to the Rangers. It's short and snappy, with Mr. Barry showing quite a temper as well as a way with the women. Republic.
- f DRESSED TO KILL—Lloyd Nolan, Mary Beth Hughes. Based on the novel "The Dead Take No Bows" by Richard Burke, and the character created by Brett Halliday. Directed by Eugene Forde. A good detective yarn featuring the sleuthing of the happy-go-lucky private investigator, Michael Shayne. This time he discovers a double murder on the way to his own wedding and turns off the romantic stuff to find out who did it and incidentally pick up a few dollars by selling the exclusive to the paper. The film has a better than average plot, good direction and loads of suspense. Besides that it has Mr. Nolan in high gear. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj FUGITIVE VALLEY—Ray Corrigan, John King, Max Terhune. Original screen story by Oliver Drake. Directed by S. Roy Luby. A pleasant and well constructed film for a western that bears favorable comparison with others of this series. The boys are as coy and tuneful as ever and the comedy more restrained and effective. The Busters join up with an outlaw gang which has proved too smart for the local marshal and by dint of guile and heroics bring the bad men to their just deserts. All told the movie is a fast action film and as such quite satisfactory. Range Busters.
- f GANGS OF SONORA—Robert Livingston, Bob Steele, Rufe Davis. Original screen story by Albert Damon and Doris Schroder. Directed by John English. A neat and lively Western about the struggle Wyoming folk had to get into the Union because certain crooked people found it more profitable for themselves to keep the territory in their own hands. The Three Mesquiteers, as we have come to expect, do and dare on the side of truth and justice and they turn in as good a job as they have ever done. Republic.
- f GIRL MUST LIVE, A—Margaret Lockwood, Rene Houston, George Robey. Original screen story by Emily Bonett. Directed by Carol Reed. Though the title wouldn't indicate it, this is quite a swift-paced farce dealing with three chorines and their efforts to nab off an earl just returned from seven years on a rubber plantation. One of the chorines is just gold-digging by chance but actually is a suitable wife for the earl. But the other two are real artists in their profession and supply plenty of good knock-about fun. There are also one or two jibes at Hollywood in this English production which are worth a good chuckle, Universal.
- f HOUSE OF MYSTERY—Kenneth Kent, Judy Kelly, Walter Rilla. Based on a novel by A. E. W. Mason. Directed by Walter Summers. This mystery is a British import which keeps you guessing in elegant style. Inspector Hanoud's problem is to locate the murderer who posed as a spirit in killing the rich dowager during a seance. The movie gives you every clue in an open way but keeps you in tantalizing ignorance as to how to put them together until the end. The photography is poor but the direction and acting are sound. Monogram.
- f HURRICANE SMITH—Ray Middleton, Jane Wyatt. Original screen story by Charles G. Booth. Directed by Bernard Vorhaus. The tale of a rodeo cowboy who is mistaken for a murderer and condemned to death. He escapes and the real criminal mangled by a train is thought to be he. Together with his wife he goes off to a small town and becomes the big man of the place. Well acted and directed. The plot is more logical than is usual in a western. Republic.
- f JAIL HOUSE BLUES—Nat Pendleton, Anne Gwynne. Original screen story by Paul Gerard Smith. Directed by Albert S. Rogell. A happy and tuneful take-off on amateur theatricals in a penitentiary. Nat Pendleton, who has found his true vocation as a showman refuses to leave the jail he's in, even though he's pardoned, until he produces his show. The leading lady (a dangerous hatchet man) breaks prison and Nat has to go out to get him. The adventures involving his mother and her racket and a pair of young sweethearts and culminating in the prison musical are side-splitting at times. All in all a zany movie that works, thanks to good direction and a fine cast. Universal.
- f LADY SCARFACE—Dennis O'Keefe, Judith Anderson. From the story by Richard Collins and Armand D'Usseau. Directed by Frank Woodruff. As might be guessed this is a gangster film with the bad men led by a ruthless woman who has a livid scar on her left cheek-

it is not made clear whether she took her wrong turn because of this disfigurement but an honest life certainly seems to make her sick. The bright and forward newspaper girl interfering with the cops is a bit irritating, but there is some fun in seeing Miss Anderson looking grimmer if possible. Generally the film is a pleasant cops-and-robbers picture, though the suspense is over-done. RKO Radio.

Academy and their trials with discipline and the school code. The spotlight is focused on three boys, a rich man's son, a lad from a navy family and a kid from a reform school who is being given a chance to make good. The piece is old hat as far as plot goes, but is attractively played by the youthful cast. Columbia.

f LOVE CRAZY—Myrna Loy, William Powell. Original screen story by David Hertz and William Ludwig. Directed by Jack Conway. That Powell-Loy affair again survives a storm of complications with Mr. Powell trying to prove himself insane and then sane to keep the affection of his eccentric wife after four years of wedded life. Some of the situations have been seen before and there are some moments of strain, but there are still spots of delicious fun in the stars' old sophisticated tempo. The elevator sequence at least will leave you exhausted from laughter. Metro-Goldwyn Mayer.

f NEW YORK TOWN — Fred MacMurray, Mary Martin, Robert Preston, Eric Blore. Original screen story by Jo Swerling. Directed by Charles Vidor. A good bit of the picturesqueness of New York has got into this picture, and some of the haphazard turnings that romance may take. It's a story of a young man who thinks he is very practical, with no use for love and the girl he advises to go out for a rich husband. Slight enough in plot, but it keeps up a merry pace with some hilarious interludes, particularly a "Double or Quits" quiz broadcast. Also a dachshund that competes for acting honors. Paramount.

f MEDICO OF PAINTED SPRINGS, THE —Charles Starrett, Terry Walker. Based on a book by James L. Rubel. Directed by Lambert Hilyer. The idea of putting a doctor into a western is so simple, it's surprising that this is its first appearance. It injects a good shot in the arm of a routine western and makes quite a taut and original plot possible. This one has the doctor discovering the guilty party who is playing the sheepmen against the cattlemen and plays the doctor as a romantic rival for the local girl. But the doctor, remaining neutral in every dispute, leaves the girl to her first suitor. The male quartette also furnished some good music. Columbia.

f NO GREATER SIN — Leon Ames, Luana Walters. Original screen story by Mary C. Ransome. Directed by William Nigh. A remarkably well made and adroitly handled film dealing with the conditions that abet the spread of syphilis in communities, especially in sections where defense factories and training camps are situated. It further points out the means whereby both the state and private individuals can eradicate the disease, paramount among these being education and easily available treatment. All the documentary material is cleverly presented by means of plot which dramatizes the situations. In this case the story does not detract from the film as a documentary in the least. University Film Productions, Inc.

f MILLION DOLLAR BABY—Priscilla Lane, Jeffrey Lynn, Ronald Reagan. Original screen story by Leonard Spigelgass. Directed by Curtis Bernhardt. A Cinderella story with a vengeance. Leaving her Swiss castle, a rich old expatriate comes back to New York to give a million dollars to the young and pretty granddaughter of a man whom the wealthy woman's father swindled out of a fortune. The drama revolves around the difficulties the new found riches present to the girl. The film has tunes, a good cast, swift movement and a plot to end all improbabilities. Warner Bros.

m OUT OF THE FOG — John Garfield, Ida Lupino, Thomas Mitchell. Based on the play by Irwin Shaw. Directed by Anatole Litvak. Mr. Shaw's play, "The Gentle People," in screen form retains its fascinating locale of the Brooklyn water-front, and its dramatic plot of the gangster preying upon some innocent fisher-folk but eventually losing out by a natural drowning, but the movie version has retained too much of the poetic dialogue so that its characters seem less real than former film water-front denizens. The climax manages to be quite tense and the final solution is thoroughly satisfying despite the sluggishly atmospheric beginning. Warner Bros.

f MOONLIGHT IN HAWAII — Jane Frazee, The Merry Macs, Leon Errol, Mischa Auer. Original screen story by Eve Greene. Directed by Charles Lamont. The cast and director conspire in this not too original film to produce a very amusing and tuneful show. It is all about a foursome of talented youths cavorting in Hawaii and attempting to land jobs on the radio advertising pineapple juice. The sequence of Leon Errol and the Ming china is not to be missed. Lots of fun in this film. Universal.

f PARSON OF PANAMINT, THE—Charles Ruggles, Ellen Drew, Philip Terry. Based on a story by Peter B. Kyne. Directed by William McGann. This fable of the rise and fall of a gold-rush town is original and entertaining, if not brilliant in any way. The conflict is between a saloonkeeper and a parson to gain the favor of the local congregation. The parson is the winner despite being embroiled in a melodramatic murder while defending one of his sheep, the saloon's songstress. Its writing, direction and acting are simple to the point of being elementary, but Ruggles as the town mayor and moderator is most satisfying,

fj NAVAL ACADEMY—Freddie Bartholomew, Jimmy Lydon. Original screen story by Robert James Cosgriff. Directed by Erle C. Kenton. A pleasant little fable of boys in a Naval

making the parable of Panamint easy to take. Paramount.

- f PEPE - LE - MOKO — Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin, Charpin. Based on the novel by D'Ashebe. Directed by Julien Duvivier. The final phase in the career of, a famous jewel thief who had taken refuge in the native quarters of Algiers. M. Gabin plays the title role with great awareness and art and is supported by a most accomplished cast. Rich in detail and character and directed at good swift pace. The murder of the stool-pigeon and the suicide of Pepe are extremely effective. (French with English subtitles) Mayer & Burstin.

- f POISON PEN — Flora Robson. Original screen story by Richard Llewellyn. Directed by Paul L. Stein. Great havoc is let loose in a small English village when a flood of anonymous letters lying about the virtue of husbands and wives terrifies the villagers. The local vicar vainly attempts to quiet his flock and is forced to call in the police before the criminal is brought to bay. The story suffers from want of surprise and too little suspense, but on the credit side are fine characterizations by the cast and especially by Flora Robson. The sets are lovely and apparently quite authentic. (British production) Republic.

- f RAWHIDE RANGER—Johnny Mack Brown, Fuzzy Knight, Kathryn Adams. Original screen story by Ed Earl Repp. Directed by Ray Taylor. This rather routine western has nevertheless been whipped up with more spirit than others of its class. A Texas Ranger, infuriated at the killing of his younger brother, resigns from the Rangers in order to actually join the gang which was responsible for the brother's death. Needless to say, he finds the gang's chief, kills him, turns in the gang, and is reinstated in the Rangers with a promotion. The music and the comedy have considerable zip and the camera work is attractively handled. Universal.

- f RINGSIDE MAISIE—Ann Sothorn, George Murphy, Robert Sterling. Original screen story by Mary C. McCall, Jr. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Poor Maisie is still short on cash, long on morals, and struggling to hide that come-hither look in her eye. This time she gets mixed up with the fighting Irish, convincingly personified by Robert Sterling as the boxer and George Murphy as the manager. After a good, breezy beginning, the picture gets down to some serious boxing and drama but it is genuine in either sphere, making another pretty feather in Maisie's hat. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f SCATTERGOOD PULLS THE STRINGS —Guy Kibbee, Bobs Watson. Adapted from the stories of Clarence Budington Kelland. Directed by Christy Cabanne. This is a thoroughly homey and wholesome story of how Scattergood Baines restores a wandering boy to his estranged father, helps two youngsters on their way to the altar and reforms all the sour

personalities of the village with his barrage of platitudes. Little Bobs Watson with the big cheeks and eyes so near welling-over does the best job in the chapter on Scattergood. RKO Radio.

- f SEALED LIPS— see BEYOND THE LAW, former title.

- f SHE KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS — Joan Bennett, Franchot Tone. Based on a story by Jane Allen. Directed by Richard Wallace. The story of a chorus girl who gets a job in a Wall Street firm to win the approbation of the owner so she may marry his youthful protege, a match which the broker opposes. Of course she wins her employer's heart and this causes most of the complications. A light fairly funny farce, with nothing too new in situation or gag. Columbia.

- f SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS, THE—John Wayne, Betty Field, Harry Carey. Based on the novel by Harold Bell Wright. Directed by Henry Hathaway. The Technicolor of the film is very handsome. This and a fine cast do wonders for the well used and dated story of the man who removed the blood curse from the outcast family of moon-shiners in the Kentucky hills by his own fearlessness and understanding. The picture is quite slow in pace and packed with dialect and strange motivation which some cutting would help out no end. Paramount.

- fj SIX-GUN GOLD—Tim Holt. Original screen story by Tom Gibson. Directed by David Howard. Tim, on a visit to his brother who is the U.S. marshal in a gold mining district, finds an impostor posing as his brother. He links up the recent raiding of gold shipments with the false law officer and in proper western style runs down the villains, finds his brother and brings safety to the marauded gold miners. It's wholesome and tuneful but save for the finale not very fast. RKO Radio.

- f SUNSET IN WYOMING — Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette. Original screen story by Joe Blair. Directed by William Morgan. Not one of the best of Gene's films but wholesome and tuneful as we have come to expect his work to be. The problem presented is for Gene to convince the owner of a lumber company that the wholesale despoiling of a mountain of its trees causes the floods that periodically wash out the homes and possessions of ranchers in the valley. This he tries manfully to do but success comes only when the rich folk are themselves caught in a flood when attempting to leave the place after turning down the proposal to preserve the forest and save the ranches. Republic.

- f THEY MEET AGAIN—Jean Hersholt. Original screen story by Peter Milne. Directed by Erle C. Kenton. In this section of Dr. Christian's career he saves the life of a gifted little girl whose father is in jail on a charge of misappropriating bank funds. The singing of the child is good, but the story goes further

than usual in exploiting the pathetic and the homely virtues. Fans of the series will find the film satisfactory and perhaps tear-compelling, but they won't be startled out of their seats. RKO Radio.

f **THEY MET IN BOMBAY**—Clark Gable, Rosalind Russell. Based on a story by John Kafka. Directed by Clarence Brown. The story for this picture is rather garbled, starting with the two stars indulging in slick thievery in Bombay but then indulging in army heroics by Mr. Gable as a fake British officer in the evacuation of Hong Kong. Despite this strange mixture, Gable and Miss Russell are consistently amusing and very active and the backgrounds hold the eye. Also, Peter Lorre, Jessie Ralph and Reginald Owen come on for interesting bits which satisfy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

f **3 SONS O' GUNS**—Wayne Morris, Marjorie Rambeau, Irene Rich, Tom Brown. Original screen story by Fred Niblo, Jr. Directed by Ben Stollhoff. The Patterson household is as nimble and noisy as a circus and also good for some laughs. There are the three ungrateful boys who are in a frenzy of pointless activity until the draft gets after them. Then, of course, they make a scramble for key positions and seek dependents to support. There is also Mother who has slaved for the boys since father's death and is now considering a marriage for security, and there is Aunt Lottie to harass them all. The boys are finally drafted however, and everyone especially Uncle Sam, is better off. Warner Bros.

f **TIGHT SHOES**—John Howard, Binnie Barnes. Based on a story by Damon Runyon. Directed by Albert S. Rogell. A satire on the racket game and its political hook-up. A young shoe salesman in disgust at a street corner speaker makes accusations of the complicity of the local machine in the gambling game and leads a crowd to one of the places. The newspaper takes him up and he runs for alderman. There is a deal of fun in the film and a rather well controlled romance; all told it's a fairly good production. Universal.

f **WILD GEESE CALLING**—Henry Fonda, Joan Bennett, Warren William. Based on the novel by Stewart Edward White. Directed by John Brahm. A beautifully photographed and directed romance about a young fellow possessed of the wanderlust. Traveling from lumbercamp to lumbercamp, from Washington state to Alaska he picks up a wife in a dance hall only to find out she had been the over-intimate girl friend of a pal of his. The discovery hasn't a very pleasant effect on him but he sticks by her until she has her baby. By that time love conquers his squeamishness and the film ends happily. The softening up of the story at the end mars somewhat a very satisfactory movie of the northwest variety, but the shots of flying geese, the fine performances, the lovely landscapes and the general poetic flavor of the film make for rather pleasant watching. 20th Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f **AQUAPLAY** (The World of Sports)—The audience's leg muscles will ache just watching these sportsmen riding the waves behind motor boats on skis or toboggan. Columbia.
- f **BATTLE, THE** (Carey Wilson Miniature)—An interesting short, filming the Naval maneuvers at Panama in a mock battle to conquer the Black fleet. The camera boards all the types of ships used for naval defense and offense. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **BEAUTIFUL ONTARIO** (Columbia Tour) — Ontario provides handsome scenery for Technicolor photography in spite of drawbacks in the dialogue for this travel film. Columbia.
- f **BIG BILL TILDEN** (Sports Parade) — The past-master of the tennis court gives very clear and helpful pointers on services and back-hand shots. Vitaphone.
- fj **CAPITAL SIDELIGHTS** (Cinescope) — A trip through Washington with comments on the figures in our history at various sites connected with their careers. It includes a quiz to test your knowledge of history. Columbia.
- f **COFFINS ON WHEELS** (Crime Does Not Pay Series)—A violent accident with some young boys involved proves the point of this short that any purchaser of a second-hand car should examine carefully his car and his contract before making his purchase. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **CRAIG WOOD** (RKO Pathe Sportscope) — Mr. Wood is the golfer who, after 20 years of competing, finally won a cup. Here are his instructions for golfing. RKO Radio.
- f **CUBAN RHYTHM** (Pete Smith Specialty) — It is much pleasanter to learn the rumba and the conga from this film with Pollard and Alvarez demonstrating the Arthur Murray method, than to embarrass yourself and partner by experimenting on the dance floor. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **DIVING THRILLS** (World of Sports) — Bill Stern narrates, to the accompaniment of some excellent shots of champion divers doing their water wonders. Columbia.
- f **EMPIRE IN EXILE** (The World Today) — Leland Stowe points out the defense measures taken by the Dutch East Indies and their loyalty to the present non-existent free Holland. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **FIGHTER PILOT** (Cinescope) — A very interesting film of the trials of a British fighter pilot in his duties of defending England from bombers. Evidently constructed of real news shots. Columbia.
- fj **FUN ON ROLLERS** (Sports Review) — A film demonstrating the jolly time one can have roller-skating, with a few frills for those who like being clever. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **GARDEN SPOT OF THE EARTH** (Variety Views) — Besides showing the famous gardens of Victoria, this film also shows scenes of salmon fishing and lumbering and native crafts of Vancouver. Universal.
- f **GOING PLACES No. 92—"Mountain Summer"** —A color film showing the sports and scenic delights to be found in Banff in the Canadian Rockies. Universal.
- f **HAITI, LAND OF DARK MAJESTY**—A James A. Fitzpatrick Traveltalk in Technicolor showing the sights natural and historical of the island. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **HANDS OF DESTINY** — Dr. Joseph Ransald describes the destiny he read in the palms of Mussolini, Hitler, Churchill and Roosevelt. Paramount.
- f **HARVESTS FOR TOMORROW**—This government documentary captures well the pastoral beauties of agrarian New England in its narration by Frank Craven and especially in its many handsome pictures. It was designed to encourage farmers to cooperate and accept the willing help of their local A.A.A. office, and it briefly traces the sapping of the soil by previous generations and its revitalization by modern methods. (Distributed gratis by Warners and Loews) U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.
- fj **HOOLA BOOLA** (Madcap Models) — That old smooch, Jim Dandy, is about to be food for

- a cannibal feast until a Hawaiian beauty, impersonating a local voodoo, comes to his rescue. The color is splendid in this one. Paramount.
- fj **HOW GOES CHILE** (Special)—A travelogue through the land of our South American neighbor with time out to show Germans and their influence. RKO Radio.
- f **INFORMATION PLEASE No. 10**—Louis Bromfield joins the experts in dishing out learning with a laugh. RKO Radio.
- f **INFORMATION PLEASE No. 11**—The experts deal out a few more facts from their limitless source of supply, with Jan Struther as a pleasant aid. RKO Radio.
- f **INFORMATION PLEASE No. 12**—Boris Karloff is the guest of the four savants this time and all shine as brightly as ever in supplying the answers. RKO Radio.
- f **INTERNATIONAL FORUM No. 2**—"Invasion"—This is not so much a discussion as a statement of one idea by four experts, the idea being that Hitler will invade England but nevertheless, there'll always be an England if we do our part. The experts are Wythe Williams, Linton Welles, Major Elliot and Ralph Ingersoll, and their sentiments parallel most of our own sentiments so closely that our audiences will applaud. Columbia.
- f **JOCKEY'S DAY** (RKO Pathe Sportscope) — There is much more than riding in order to become a good jockey as this will tell you. Can you tell the mood of your mount from hour to hour? RKO Radio.
- fj ***JUNGLE**—An impressive and at times lovely color film of the Indian jungle, replete with boas, tigers, monkeys and flowers. The closing shot of a herd of elephants going to a pool is a fine presentation of the jungle monarchs in their strength and majesty. The film has fairly crude color as a disadvantage, but to offset this it has a great deal of cinematic poetry. Paramount.
- f **LIASSO WIZARDS** (Grantland Rice Sportlight) —Examples of plain and fancy rope work by a group of lasso champions, narrated by Ted Husing. Paramount.
- f **LETTER FROM CAIRO, A**—A lovely travelogue through Cairo and its environs showing the sights that most impressed the Anzac troops stationed there. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **LIONS ON THE LOOSE** (Pete Smith Specialty) —Lion cubs are really very entertaining and lovable when at play, even with a cobra. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **MAN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD, THE**—An historical film of the discovery of the principle of the spinning jenny by James Hargrave and the consequent industrial revolution. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **MARCH OF TIME No. 10, THE** (7th Series)—"Crisis in the Atlantic, 1941" — The convoy system is explained in this issue and the growing importance of Greenland is covered quite well, pointing of course to the great help we could give Britain by assisting with the convoy. RKO Radio.
- f ***MARCH OF TIME No. 11, THE** (7th Series)—"China Fights Back" — The March of Time Editors have compiled an eloquent statement of Chiang Kai Shek to revitalize his people, add to his armaments and keep the Burma Road open. The stock shots from news reels and the inevitable sympathy for China's cause are fused with fine taste and understatement. RKO Radio.
- f **MARCH OF TIME No. 12, THE** (7th Series)—"New England's Eight Million Yankees" — A survey of the background, the land and the determination of New England Yankees to put their all into fore-stalling Hitler's threat to American institutions. Made with the usual facile art of the series and quite informative. RKO Radio.
- f **MARCH OF TIME No. 13, THE** (7th Series)—"Peace by Adolph Hitler" — A comprehensive survey of the war, laying emphasis on Hitler's free and easy treatment of nonaggression pacts. The moral implied being the folly of having anything to do with Nazi peace overtures. Some of the shots of the war and the personalities involved were very good, but this film is rather below the usual excellence of the series. RKO Radio.
- f **MEET THE STARS No. 6** — Harriet Parsons takes us into the lavish homes of Jane Withers and Cesar Romero. Republic.
- f **MEET THE STARS No. 7**—The celebrities turn out in force for the opening of Roy Rogers's new cowboy store. Republic.
- f **MEET THE STARS No. 8**—The stars at play and the dedication of a Republic studio to the memory of Mabel Normand, featuring the old stars of silent days, makes up most of the film. Republic.
- f **MOBY DICK'S HOME TOWN** (Variety Views) —New Bedford is very well covered in this informational, both in its relics of the whale-fishing days and in its modern industries. Universal.
- f **POPULAR SCIENCE No. 6**—We look at the mushroom industry, Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture and venom milking on a snake farm in this one. Paramount.
- f **ROLLING RHYTHM** (Sportscope)—The art of roller-skating as displayed in such places as Radio City and Madison Square Garden. RKO Radio.
- f **SAGEBRUSH AND SILVER** (Magic Carpet)—Lowell Thomas chatters through the sights of Nevada, Virginia City, Reno and the loveliness of its deserts, mountains and waterways, 20th Century-Fox.
- f **SAIL HO!** (Sports Parade) — Some elemental advice is offered on controlling the sails on cat-boats and sloops with lovely shots of boats in action. Vitaphone.
- f **SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 9** — Apparently about every celebrity in Hollywood attended, to judge from this description of the testimonial dinner given Jack Benny marking his tenth year on the radio. Columbia.
- f **SEEING EYE, THE**—This tells of the training required of both the dog and the master in making the dog serviceable to the blind. Vitaphone.
- f **SKY SAILING** (Sports Parade) — Sail planing certainly appears graceful and simple whether in a home-made glider or a stream-lined two-seater, with a deluxe cabin. Vitaphone.
- f **SNOW DOGS** (Grantland Rice Sportlight) — The film exhibits several handsome teams of Huskies at work dragging sleighs through the lovely mountains of our northeastern states. It concludes with a delightful family of Saint Bernards that will warm any dog lover's heart. Paramount.
- f **SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC**—A radio quiz program pleasantly filmed and having such celebrities as Henrik Willem Van Loon and Jessica Dragonette to give the answers. Columbia.
- f **SOLDIERS OF THE SKY** — A thrilling and informative film showing the training and the tactics of American troops in the parachute squadron. The finale is particularly exciting. 20th Century-Fox.
- f **STEEDS AND STEERS** (RKO Sportscope) — A-1 rope-work is demonstrated by Monte Mantanna and all kinds of bronco-busting are done by some expert rodeo-stars. RKO Radio.
- fj **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 93** — The making of coral oddities; a church opened twice a year; a goose-stepping dog and the duck mascot at Camp Stewart make up some of the unusual things described in the film. Universal.
- fj **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 94**—Here we have books being illustrated for the blind; the manufacture of corn-cob pipes and a sight of some rare birds brought from the Santa Catalina aviary. Universal.
- fj **STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 95** — Model boats, Navy posters and the knitted covers for Champagne bottles to be used in christening ships occupy most of the footage in this entertaining picture. Universal.
- f **TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT** — Bob Hawk poses his questions amusingly as is his way over the radio. Columbia.
- f **TEE UP** (World of Sports)—Bill Stern provides a running commentary to the presentation of golf technique by the champion, Patty Berg. Columbia.
- f **THIS IS THE BOWERY** (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade)—Filmed entirely on the Bowery and acted by its horde of completely lost men, a new high in originality and simplicity is reached; especially moving is the sequence dealing with the Bowery Mission which is happy if it can regenerate one in a hundred bums. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 6** — The film includes a model circus made for a little girl;

- the making of antique rifles; a very interesting sequence of the care and feeding of fish in a large salt water aquarium where the marine habitat of inmates is carefully copied to keep them happy. Several shots of rays and turtles are handsome examples of underwater photography. Paramount.
- f WINGS OF STEEL—With Technicolor shots of Air Corps planes in action, this briefly covers the schooling of an Air Corps Cadet with a plot development connecting the whole. Vitaphone.
- f WINTER IN ESKIMO LAND (Father Hubbard Alaskan Adventures)—Father Hubbard does a fine job of relating the tale of the domestic life of the Eskimo; particularly nice are the shots of the native lads boxing and playing football. If you like animals, there are two cute seal pups. 20th Century-Fox.
- f YOUR LAST ACT (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade)—This pries into some truly amazing wills of the past, some of which are humorous, others bitter, and others noble. But they are all very interesting. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MUSICALS

- f MUSIC A LA KING — Henry King and his orchestra provide pleasant enough music but the real hit is a male quartet singing "Comin' Thru the Rye," and a couple of other songs. Universal.
- f ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME — A pleasant musical short featuring Skinnay Ennis and his band and a deal of dancing and singing talent. Universal.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj ALLEY CAT, THE—The title character woos a Park Avenue belle of infinite beauty and refinement and sweeps her off her feet with his alley ways. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj BRINGING HOME THE BACON (Terrytoon Cartoon)—A cute Terrytoon about a bright fox who provides well for his family in spite of dogs and such. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj CHILD PSYKOLOJIKY (Popeye Cartoon) — Popeye demonstrates the way to handle a wayward kid scientifically. Paramount.
- fj CUCKOO I.Q. (Color Rhapsody Cartoon)—This is quite a clever burlesque of the many quiz programs with perfectly sane questions and answers but some horrible penalties for the cartoon brain trust. Columbia.
- fj DANCE OF THE WEED (MGM Miniature)—A lovely pastel-shaded cartoon-ballet with a weed buffoon courting the woodland flowers. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj DUMB LIKE A FOX—A gay little cartoon of the troubles of a pup hound-dog in dealing with a very wily fox. Columbia.
- fj EARLY TO BED (Donald Duck Cartoon)—Poor Donald certainly makes a nice filling for a sandwich in his collapsible bed and that isn't all that happens on just the night when he had to get up early. RKO Radio.
- fj HORSE FLY OPERA (Terrytoon)—A cartoon exploiting the insect world in the manner of the old-fashioned Western. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj MIDNIGHT SNACK, THE (Cartoon)—Another turn-about tale where mouse beats the cat roundly and all because of an inviting ice-box full of food. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj NIFTY NINETIES (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—Mickey and Minnie are caught courting at the old vaudeville in the Opey House where "Father, dear Father" brings tears to the most callow slicker. RKO Radio.
- fj OLD MacDonald DUCK (Walt Disney Donald Duck Cartoon) — Farmer Donald is attacked, while at his milking, by a vicious fly, the ensuing battle being a savage one. RKO. Radio.
- fj OLD OAKEN BUCKET, THE (Terrytoon Cartoon)—This cute color cartoon busies itself with the wooing of a bull-frog who calls on his lady frog by using a bucket as an elevator down to her home in a well. The amusement park sequence is particularly nice. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj ORPHAN'S BENEFIT (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Mickey is master-of-ceremonies for a vaudeville show presented before innumerable little mouse-orphans, the show including everything from grand-opera to a bovine apache dance. RKO Radio.

- fj ROOKIE BEAR—A color cartoon about a hibernating bear who dreams he is inducted into the army and suffers a great deal. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj TOY TROUBLE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A mouse and caterpillar do some night prowling in a toy shop which proves far from pleasant for them. Vitaphone.
- fj TRIAL OF MR. WOLF (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—That dastard who made off with Red Riding Hood's grandmama comes up for retrial and confects a magnificent story as alibi, but the jury is not sucked in. His alibi is a corker though. Vitaphone.
- fj TRUANT OFFICER DONALD (Donald Duck Cartoon)—Boy! what a fight when Donald catches up with the three pupils who are playing hooky—was his face red! RKO Radio.
- fj WHAT HAPPENS AT NIGHT (Terrytoon Cartoon)—Borrowing from "Fantasia," this cartoon in Technicolor shows fireflies and imaginative creatures of the night assembling for revels in an abandoned windmill. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj WOODY WOODPECKER (Walter Lantz Cartoon)—A highly Technicolored woodpecker is violently insane as a cut-up but he has nothing on the doctor examining him. Universal.

Books About Films

Books Into Films

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James Shelley Hamilton

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizen body, organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium for reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community cooperation in the advancement and uses of the motion picture.

The National Board is opposed to legal censorship and is in favor of the community better films plan of placing emphasis upon and building support for the finer and more worthwhile films. It is at all times glad to cooperate with any agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities both as recreation and as entertainment.

It carries on its work through various committees. All members of the committees serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

The General Committee is a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee is composed of members of the General Committee and is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee is a large group of 300 members carrying on the work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new mem-

bers for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Committee on Exceptional Photoplays is composed of critics and students of the cinema interested particularly in encouraging the artistic development of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films and assists community groups in the showing of unusual films to special audiences.

NATIONAL MOTION PICTURE COUNCIL

The community or field work of the National Board of Review is conducted under its National Motion Picture Council, through affiliated membership groups, service contact groups and correspondents throughout the country. The National Council assists in the organization and program of work of local groups which are usually called Councils.

These Councils follow a plan initiated by the National Board in 1916 of having a membership composed of representatives from many organizations, cultural, educational, recreational, religious, and civic, so that they typify the original movement for community participation in the development and best use of the motion picture as recreation and education.

The objectives of such organizations are as follows:

To demonstrate through the education of public opinion, the effectiveness of selection and classification, instead of censorship, as a means of forwarding the development of the motion picture and its best uses.

To encourage through open meetings, forums, classes and other means, the study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, education and artistic expression.

To concentrate the attention of the public on specific worthwhile films through the publication of a Photoplay Guide to the selected pictures being currently shown at local theatres.

To arrange family Friday night or week-end programs of selected films, and junior matinees of pictures particularly suited to the tastes of children, through cooperation with local exhibitors.

To endorse and further the use of visual education through motion pictures in the schools.

To arrange and promote occasional exhibitions of exceptional and cultural films that would not normally be shown in the commercial theatres.

PUBLICATIONS

The National Board of Review and its Council as an aid to the groups carrying out these objectives furnishes an informational service through its publications.

National Board of Review Magazine (monthly)

\$2.00 a year for individual subscriptions
\$1.00 a year to Council or club groups.

Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures

\$2.50 a year when taken alone.
\$1.00 in conjunction with the Magazine.

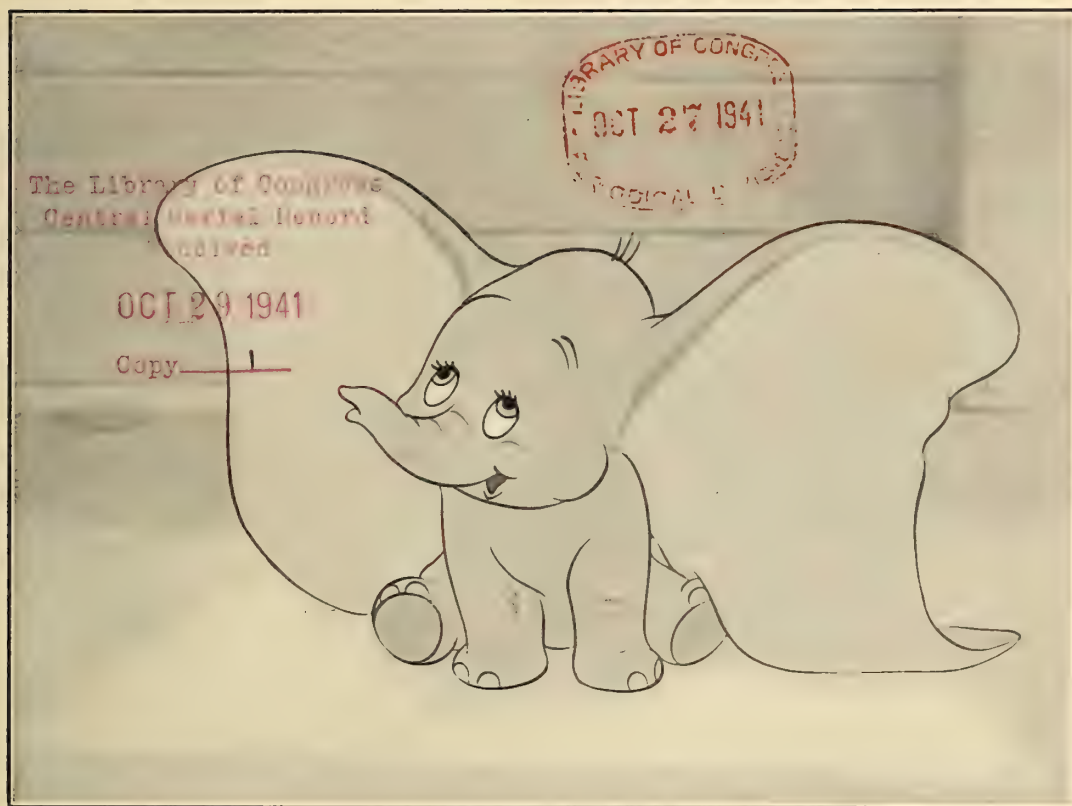
A listing of all publications and services is available upon request.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. XVI, No. 7



October, 1941



"Dumbo" (see page 7)

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National Board of Review of Motion Pictures' Eighteenth Annual Conference
November 13th-15th, Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

f *ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY — Edward Arnold, Walter Huston, James Craig, Jane Darwell. Based on the story "The Devil and Daniel Webster" by Stephen Vincent Benet. Directed by William Dieterle. A Faustian legend laid in New Hampshire in the 1840s. A poor farmer who sells his soul to the Devil for seven years of good luck finally realizes the bitterness of his fate when Mister Scratch (as the infernal gentleman likes to be known in New England) appears to execute the contract. Daniel Webster, however, points out to the unfortunate husbandman that his soul is worth a fight and undertakes to represent him in a court whose judge and jury are made up of the damned spirits of notorious Americans. On all counts this is a splendid film, story, direction, camera work and acting. Mr. Huston makes a delightful Scratch, gay, wily, debonair, with a sobering maliciousness appearing on occasion. And Mr. Arnold as Black Daniel is eloquent and everything we could wish the statesman to be. He gives a very natural and human portrayal of the senator from Massachusetts. A witty, beautiful, moving movie; timely and generally strong, sound cinema. RKO-Radio.

f *BURMA CONVOY — Charles Bickford, Evelyn Ankers. Original screen story by Stanley Rubin, Roy Chancelor. Directed by Noel M. Smith. An excellent, well-knit melodrama with the Burma Road for background. Information on the time and route of trucks carrying supplies for Chungking has been leaking out and the action consists in tracking down the official who is selling the schedules. The photography is unusually good and the material, otherwise old stuff, has been freshened and intensified by its application to so

interesting and timely a subject as the supplying of the Chinese over this historic thoroughfare. The film constructed with remarkable taste and using comedy and romance most dexterously never halts or obscures its action. And one scene is quite unforgettable: Willi Fung singing "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair." Universal.

f *DIVE BOMBER — Errol Flynn, Fred MacMurray, Ralph Bellamy. Original screen story by Frank Wead. Directed by Michael Curtiz. This time it's the medical department of the Naval Air Corps that has its cinematic glorification, and as a good, sound job of documentation and simple fiction the producer provides the public an interesting and pleasant film. The cast particularly deserves praise: Mr. Flynn portrays brightly and sincerely the medico slaving to find the answer to the health problems posed by stratosphere flying; in a smaller part Mr. Bellamy is very little behind him in his performance; and Mr. MacMurray as the truculent and fast burning out squad commander who for all his skepticism offers himself as the guinea-pig for the research doctors attains almost heroic stature. The grand thing about the picture, however, is the marvelous aerial photography in Technicolor of planes in flight formations and bombing tactics that at times takes away your breath. Not since the horse has the movie camera had a natural like the airplane, and this film exploits the composition, movement and fluidity of soaring aircraft to the utmost. The delight obtained in the flight sequences is apt at the time to obscure the fact that they are not always needed to carry on the tale of conquering the occupational complaints picked up at an altitude of 40,000 feet, but on reflection this defect detracts somewhat from the film as an integral work. Of the new movies devoted to acquainting us with the fighting services *Dive Bomber* stands with the others very favorably indeed. Besides, it's tastefully done, well cast and is a very handsome affair. Warner Brothers.

fj *DUMBO—See Exceptional Photoplays Dept., page 7.

f *HERE COMES MR. JORDAN — Robert Montgomery, Claude Rains, Evelyn Keyes, James Gleason. Based on the play by Harry Segall. Directed by Alexander Hall. A fantastic comedy using a supernatural turn as part of its plot, rich in humor, poignancy and a fine array of talent in all departments. Mr. Montgomery does a bang-up job playing a prize fighter of promise who falls in a plane wreck and finds himself on his way to the next world fifty years too soon because the collector of his soul is a novice at the job. Mr. Jordan, the heavenly supervisor of all this soul garnering, when it transpires that the original Montgomery corpus has been cremated, tries to make things right by securing the pug a new body in which to spend his remaining half century.

(Continued on page 16)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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BETTINA GUNCZY



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That Investigation in Washington

THE Board of Directors of the National Board of Review, at its first regular meeting since the senatorial sub-committee began its inquiry into the question of war-propaganda in American films, voted, on October 9, 1941, to make record of its attitude toward this inquiry to the following effect. The National Board of Review has always believed and contended that under the Constitution of the United States the motion picture should have as much right to freedom from control as the press or any other medium of expression, subject only to the laws concerning decency, libel, etc., that are in force. Naturally, then, the Board is opposed to censorship as something fundamentally un-American. It is the feeling of the Board that the senatorial inquiry now in progress has not only shown itself ignorant of the most obvious aspects of the matter it is investigating, with a tendency to deviate into complete irrelevancies, but that its principal object is to impose a kind of censorship upon the motion picture, an object which if it were achieved would be

most deplorable, not only in itself but as an entering wedge for further measures of censorship in the future.

The National Board of Review, which has defended the freedom of the screen from governmental interference and control since its organization in 1909, wishes once more to register its emphatic protest against the present so-called inquiry with its likely sequel of a renewed campaign to restrict the free expression of opinion.

The inquiry is referred to as "in progress," but that is hardly an accurate term. Little progress has been made, and though the committee asserts it is going to go on, what road it will take and where it will arrive are so hazy that progress in the future seems as unlikely as in the first weeks. The chief thing it has accomplished has been to show the movie industry, through its witnesses, in such an aspect of able, intelligent dignity as must have astounded and confounded its enemies, and to present some of our senators in a light that is singularly silly and ineffectual.

THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
of the
NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

November 13th to 15th

Hotel Pennsylvania, N. Y. C.

The Camera Way Is the Hard Way

By OTIS FERGUSON

IT is hard to realize what tedious and back-breaking work goes into the actual shooting of any Class A picture—six or eight weeks' time is more the rule than the exception, and each of those working weeks has six days, each of the days has at least eight solid hours, nine to six (often earlier to later), with a breathing spell only for lunch. The picture runs a mere hour and a half when they have finished with it, and you wonder where all the time goes. It would seem easy to get at least twenty minutes of dialogue and action into a day of hard work with cameras and stuff. And there you are: all the shooting washed up in a week, with a day to spare for retakes and special odds and ends.

Standing around on one foot and then on the other for an afternoon, dodging grips, gaffers and the constantly shifting equipment on any set, would probably give you some idea, certainly leave you dead tired, and possibly still leave doubts. All this going over and over the same few lines, the shifting of half a ton of apparatus in a long wait, the going over again—isn't this waste motion? Not in the picture of any good director, not much of it even in the technique of movies as we have them today.

That a scene is taken several times before the thing you actually see afterwards is selected is a fact merely corresponding with the rehearsal before performance in plays or music. That two or three takes of everything are printed is merely acknowledgment of the fact that the camera does not show what the eye shows ever, and even the experienced have to guess. And that many scenes are shot first from one side, then from another, then from above, etc., is the elemental fact needed for the camera to keep shifting to its highest point of emphasis and interest, while the normal and rightly placed voices of all those taking part must remain steady on the film's sound-track as the camera looks away or over them.

Take an afternoon on the set where William Wyler was starting off *The Little Foxes*—more interesting than many because of the complexity of the set-up, the size and fine design of the set itself, and the imminence of a good director's picture (don't try to catch a director's "genius" when he is working: it is in his head if he has it, and in his puttees or accent if he hasn't). The big stage is filled clear up to the parallels by three sides of a square of two-storey buildings, with a lawn and driveway, bushes and flowers, trees spreading their branches over everything and going up out of sight (see stage plan). It is also filled with people, everybody with something to do, usually something mysterious.

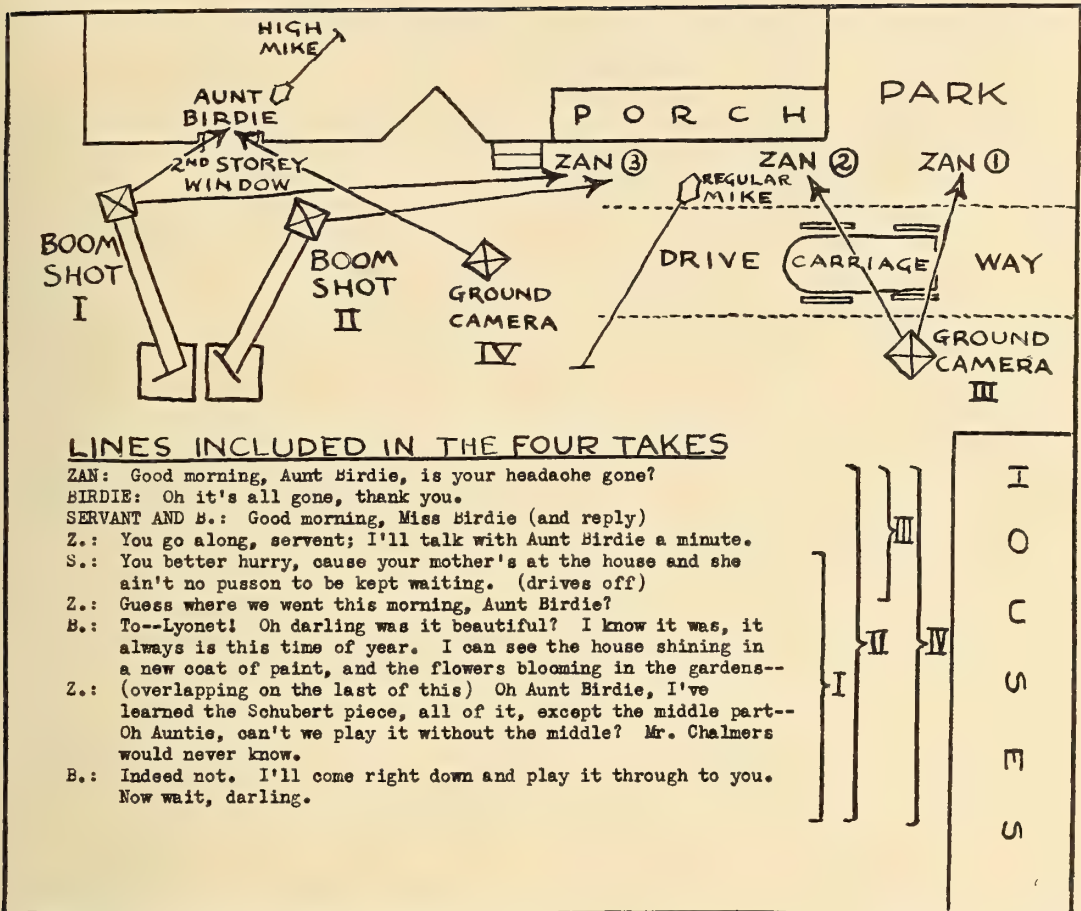
The afternoon is only a detail in the completed picture, running off before your eyes in less than a minute, but it carries on the story. It isn't even the whole of the detail, which started with trying out effective angles and maybe the first line or two in the morning. It is almost at the start of the picture as we see it now, where Zan is getting out of the buggy at her Aunt Birdie's house in the morning, her aunt coming to the upstairs window. If you look down at the set from above, this window would be at the extreme left in the back, the carriage at the extreme right. The only actual changes in position are Zan's moving three steps toward the left as the carriage drives off, then to the center and the aunt's first coming to the window and leaving it on the last line.

I will give the lines of this scene as nearly as I can remember them, then the positions of camera covering each (see cut). Then all you have to do is to see the picture and figure it out. You will be on your own, and you will not want to be a movie director again.

Zan: Good morning, Aunt Birdie, is your headache gone?

Birdie: Oh yes, it's all gone, thank you.

Queenie: Good morning, Miss Birdie.



Birdie: Good morning, Queenie.

Zan: You go along, Queenie, I want to talk to Aunt Birdie a minute.

Queenie: You better hurry, because your mother's waiting and she ain't *no* person to be kept waiting. (Drives off)

Zan (moving left): Guess where we went this morning, Aunt Birdie.

Birdie: To--Lyonnet Oh darling, was it beautiful? I know it was, it was always beautiful this time of year. I can see the house shining in a new coat of paint, and the flowers blooming in the gardens, and—

Zan (moving to center, speaking to overlap the last of this) Oh Aunt Birdie, I've learned the Schubert piece, all of it, except the middle part—Auntie, couldn't we play it without the middle? Mr. Chalmers would never know.

Birdie: Indeed we can *not*. It's so easy, I'll come right down and play it through with you. Now you wait, darling. (She retreats from window; cut.)

Now for this they had a camera on a crane, an enormous affair that looks something like a derrick, carrying the camera and its attendants up and down and right and left, forward or back on the wheels of the base; and the usual camera on the ground. The first set-up was the crane at the far left (see fig. I), on a level with and close up to Birdie's window (up among the trees too: they had the devil of a time with the trees and would now and then have to take off a branch and put it somewhere else.) Second, the crane was moved a little and the camera panned to where it could look down at Zan and the carriage (see fig. II). Third, the ground camera was far left (see fig. III), closing on Queenie in the carriage. Fourth, it was center (see fig. IV), looking up at Aunt Birdie as Zan would look up.

The same microphone on its mobile boom covered all the speeches except those of Birdie, who had a high microphone for herself.

Now if you will refer back to the few lines of speech, with their minimum of action, and keep in mind about where the people are as the camera changes: in the first position (see fig. I), the close-up of Birdie in her second story window, they shot everything from Queenie's exit speech down to the end. (And all through here the fact that the camera is turning means that everyone involved, whether he can be seen or not, is there and speaking in his place, the place his voice should come from. Everybody, the company.) From the second position (see fig. II), the crane shifted a little, camera turning to look from the distance of Birdie's window down in long-shot at the carriage group, they went through the whole business from beginning to end. (Director's voice in patient interruption: "Miss Collinge, wasn't that line 'Now you wait, darling.' This time you said 'wait right there.'" Miss Collinge: "I'm sorry." Director: "Again, please.")

From the third position (see fig. III), down on the ground near the carriage, they only make the scene as far as Queenie's exit. Then an interim of great bustle as all traces of the boom and paraphernalia are lugged away and the camera is got back to center, looking up at Birdie across the front of the house. Then they run through the whole scene again, every line, including the sound of the carriage being hauled out on the gravel drive.

Each different take was run over several times, with waits for adjustments, with actors getting weary enough of the hundredth "Good morning, Aunt Birdie," to stumble a little as they went on from there—usually on what was to have been the final one. Each different shift of anything at all, let alone the whole camera, involved a hundred adjustments down the line, with all those batteries of great and small lights on their shaky grotesque stands dragging their tangle of cables behind, with the microphone equipment and its tangles, screens and flats and scrims and broads and dobos enough to start a new language, with carpenters tacking on a board to cover and painters putting on a touch to bring up an outline. If you can imagine just a quarter of this, you will see where the time goes.

But this business of repetition, changes, repetition, changes: you don't see it in the picture but they were not just playing leap-frog. In fact the very reason you don't see it is its own justification: you are not conscious of camera or effects, for the little bit flickers past in the final version and you are only conscious that a story is starting as you follow. Only! One of the first things in making a word effective is in showing its effect on someone—so after the cutting room has got through we see Birdie as Zan is speaking to her, Zan as she hears Birdie. But *the* first thing is established: the audience must know where it is, who is talking to whom — even what is the mood of the morning and the place. So as we see Zan looking up, we instinctively raise our eyes to see that it is Birdie in the window (that's just what we think: that was Gregg Toland looking up). We see Queenie starting to preach the law and are not conscious that as her law keeps laying down we have fallen back to see the whole group, the house and the morning light and the carriage in the drive (and the horse).

To carry us this way without many strips of film to intercut is a thing technically impossible to plan: a mosaic is a simple thing in comparison, for it is not made (except by Montgomery Ward) from the starting point of: "We will take 22 reds, 14 purples, 8 greens, a yellow and whatever is left at the bottom of the kettle, and make an American eagle." It hasn't the rhythm in motion which pictures have and which music has. The director, like the composer, plans what he wants, he hears the idea in his head; the director, like the composer, needs still to try it out on his piano.

But this was not what you could hear on *The Little Foxes* set along toward six that hot day. They were bringing in the camera and the nests of lights into the downstairs room of the house for the next immediate following line, as Birdie comes down to run through the middle of the Schubert. It wasn't only their busy endurance that killed me, it was my feet; and the last line I heard on the set was "Can you for God's sake knock some of the heat off that 5000 so these white piano keys won't look like they was biting her hand off?"

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR, ARTHUR BEACH

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Dumbo

Feature cartoon made by Walt Disney from story by Helen Aberson and Harold Pearl, screen story by Joe Grant and Dick Huemer, supervising director Ben Sharpsteen, story directing Otto Englander, Music by Oliver Wallace and Frank Churchill, lyrics by Ned Washington, voices by Ed Brophy, Sterling Holloway, Herman Bing, Cliff Edwards and Verna Felton.

DUMBO is Walt Disney going back to his oldest kind of cartoon narrative, but going forward to a new brilliance and assurance of technique and to a delightful freshness of fun and charm that he has rarely reached before. To try to describe it is to run the risk of simply being dull about it, which is perhaps why the advance publicity has been more reticent than it was with *Fantasia* and *The Reluctant Dragon*. There is no Leopold Stokowsky or Robert Benchley as extraneous novelty, and no such grand intentions as a visual interpretation of classic music. It is just straight Disney, and that is reason enough for praise and rejoicing.

It is about a little elephant, the problem child of a sedate, pink-capped Mrs. Jumbo. Not a problem child in the sense of being difficult or temperamental, but just in being an ugly duckling among elephants, with embarrassing huge ears, a pathetic small freak among the group of conservative circus animals in which the stork deposited him, and so great an object of scorn to his mother's snooty friends that it drove the poor lady frantic. But like a proper ugly duckling he became a swan—he learned to fly with his enormous ears and became the hit of the show.

The plot is as simple as that, enlivened with circus music, and clowns, gay songs and the endearing Disneyesque of the animals. To keep Dumbo's sorrows from being too distressing he has a mouse to befriend him, with heart of gold and hard-boiled voice of Ed Brophy, and a flock of flashy jazzy crows, the quintessence of negro jollity and rhythm, who help bring about the miracle of an elephant able to fly. To keep the sentiment from being too sweet there is a fine saltiness of satire in the snobbery of the lady elephants. And there is another variety of elephant, the pink ones that come in alcoholic dreams, in a brilliant bizarre ballet.

Disney appears to be getting well ahead in his problem of how to cartoon humans without being comic-strippish, or just pretty or grotesque. There are quite a lot of humans in this film, the circus audience and the circus workers, and they fit in among the animals without any effect of jarring. And the use of voices is just about perfection.

But the greatest joy of *Dumbo* is its birds and animals. The Disney mythology has acquired a new set of delightful characters.

J. S. H.

Rated Exceptional

Critical Comment

Horror from Stage to Screen

A FIRST rate play can be, and often is, a disappointing movie. One reason is that people who have seen the stage version come to the movie with pre-

conceptions and grow annoyed at liberties that the director feels must be taken with the original to make it a good motion picture. And another, and more important reason, is that the director all too often does not take liberties enough to translate stage terms into cinematic terms, with the result that instead of a movie you have a photographed play, static, contemplative, drawing its life and development from dialogue and restricted action instead of from significant pantomime and the fluent stream of telling detail and rhythmic and contrasting juxtaposition of dramatic incidents. *Ladies in Retirement* suffers on both these counts. If one had not seen Flora Robson enact the repressed spinster bearing the tragic weight of her two insane sisters and her almost maniac sense of responsibility for them, he would not be apt to carp at the youth of Ida Lupino or contrast unfavorably her highly intelligent portrayal, instinct with a hopeless misery and inflexible dedication to the care of her unfortunate sisters, with the polished and terror-invoking craftsmanship of Miss Robson. If the picture has anything noteworthy about it it is the performances given by the cast, and of it Miss Lupino deserves the most applause for presenting the protagonist not as a chemically pure horror but as a person of stern character and very human susceptibilities, that break down the natural abhorrence of the spectator with a strong sense of pity. This is the more striking since the murdered actress, that Isobel Elsom plays so superbly, is a most attractive, witty person whose grasp of audience sympathy is immediate. Miss Lupino has steadily grown to rank with the best actresses the screen possesses; she has variety and the ability to transmute her emotions and thinking with a sureness and economy of means which lies in the power of hardly a half dozen women to be found in the American cinema.

The story itself distinctly is an unpleasant one. A prematurely old spinster who is the trusted and affectionately used companion of a retired variety show singer brings her two daft sisters on a short visit to her mistress' home because they have no place to go and she won't hear of an asylum. The visit pro-

tracts into weeks and the lady of the house, almost driven crazy herself with the irritating vagaries of the pair of maiden lunatics, insists they must leave the house in spite of the anguished pleas of their protectress. Driven to the wall the spinster murders her and buries her body in an old oven in the hearth and proceeds to carry on as before, telling everyone that the owner of the house left suddenly on a long visit to town. Things apparently might have gone on like this for years except that a no-good nephew of the murderess turns up and wants to be hidden until a little embezzlement job he has pulled off at the bank where he was employed blows over. By dint of snooping and guesswork he suspects the murder and attempts to use his knowledge to cut in on the dead woman's money. His aunt makes it very clear that he can hang around if he cares to take a chance on the cooking—as she suggests, the first murder is the hardest, after that it falls into a kind of routine. This suffices to make him settle for a ticket to Canada. But the conversation is overheard by the maid servant and she runs for the police. The murderess gives herself up and her unfortunate sisters apparently find refuge in a nearby convent.

The chance for action in such a plot is small. It is chiefly a study in character and the clash of personalities, elements native to the stage, but difficult to render successfully on the screen when they constitute the whole of the plot. Some bid for cinematic effect is made in the sequences devoted to comings and goings on the moor, but the action chiefly takes place in the living room of the murdered lady's house. The outdoor shots are patently of a fabricated kind, very "arty" and resembling more than anything else drops and flies of a 1920 stage production. Artificial staginess is characteristic of the sets throughout the whole of the film, degenerating into the pretty and the picturesque in an effort to give quaint atmospheric effects. These elements and the extensive dialogue, more than anything else, mar a well-knit story told by a fine cast whose power often over-reaches the hamstringing scenario and direction to produce powerful scenes of suspense and horror.

COMMUNITY NEWS-NOTES

Seeing Movies Made

Two stories of studio visits. One coming from the recently returned—

**Mrs. Dean Gray Edwards, President
Motion Picture Council of Central Queens,
Long Island, N. Y., and Chairman,
Committee on Motion Pictures,
Eastern Review Division,
General Federation of Women's Clubs**

FOR a long time I have been very much interested in motion pictures, but not since the old Vitagraph days, when they used to take outdoor movies at a spacious residence near my home, had I actually seen a picture in the making. It was a rare privilege indeed which was accorded me to see scenes from such pictures as *Swamp Water* at Twentieth Century-Fox, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Kings Row*, and *Captains in the Clouds*, at Warner's, and *Air Raids* and others at Paramount.

From the first magic words, "Quiet, everyone. Let 'er roll, Jack," which signaled that the actual shooting was about to begin, to the final "Cut the arc, Joe," which signified that the "take" was over, it was a memorable experience to see such familiar figures as Walter Brennan, Monte Wooley, Grant Mitchell, Charles Coburn, Judith Anderson, Dennis Morgan and Brenda Marshall going through their lines and paces, and to watch such brilliant directors as Jean Renoir, Sam Wood, William Keighley and Michael Curtiz, and that expert artist with the camera, James Wong Howe, guiding to perfection each seemingly unimportant bit to make the desired whole.

Ever since I have been a previewer I have been conscious of the credit names of those behind the scenes in picture making, and as a chairman I have tried to impress upon others our obligation to give to these names more than a cursory reading in our impatient expectation of what we are about to see on the screen, but I must confess that with my interest in pictures being so largely from the audience angle, where the actors

loom so preeminent upon the horizon, I was unprepared for the relatively small number of actors in comparison with the numbers of workers who thronged about the sets, each with his own particular, indispensable part to play. It is possible that it is the importance of these less idolized lights in the motion picture world which keeps the stars from losing all sense of proportions and values, for those who act in pictures must themselves realize how dependent upon these technicians is their art and reputation, even if the general public does not. I was interested to note in the scenes I witnessed how even the most experienced and skilled actors deferred to their directors and how tactfully suggestions were made by these latter craftsmen.

I was impressed by the meticulous attention to minute detail and I was amazed at the hours of rehearsal required to produce a scene which passes before one on the screen in but a few moments.

The studios are like little cities within themselves, with a labyrinth of streets which would baffle any but the well-informed young men who were assigned to guide me on my travels. I saw the carpenter shops, the huge tanks where seas are created to swamp adventurous ships, the storage rooms where the background equipment is all catalogued and filed, and after an hour's talk with Dr. Lissauer, the head of Warner's Research Department, and a perusal of the encyclopedic tomes, known as motion picture "Bibles", on *Juarez* and *Sergeant York*, I came away with the conviction that "if you see it in the movies, it is so" whether it seems so or not.

The other reporting an earlier-in-the-season visit made by—

**Mrs. Samuel B. Cuthbert,
former Motion Picture Chairman,
Allegheny County, Pa.,
Federation of Women's Clubs**

We were very much impressed with the reproduction of streets on the sets, such as

a New England village, streets of Paris, London, etc. and all so perfect even to the paving; in an old village there was the dirt road, while some were paved with bricks, others with cobblestones, all just right as to location and period. We were on the porch of the home of the *Four Daughters*, and even were permitted to swing on the famous gate. Some of the old buildings showed much traveled and worn steps, seeming to be centuries old. The *Anthony Adverse* buildings are still standing and with some changes have been used in other pictures. These buildings are very durable, not just shells of light material but built so that they last and can be used many times with certain changes. The jungles and forest are most realistic.

The wonderful lake of Warner Bros. is well worth seeing. It is as large as a football field and most of the water scenes of not only Warner Bros. but other pictures are taken there. We were up on Errol Flynn's "Sea Hawk" and looked down upon the making of *Out of the Fog*. It was very interesting to see the heavy English fog pouring out of a large hose.

The costume department is also a most interesting place, to see the rows and rows of all sorts of costumes and also those of the different stars. From there we went to the department where furniture of all periods is kept, very rare and beautiful, some almost priceless. I wonder how many who see pictures on the screen realize the amount of research behind these pictures. In the research building we saw thousands of books, pictures etc., for reference and information in making pictures in which everything must be authentic even to the smallest detail.

The sound and lighting are most important also. Hours are spent just to get the right position and light and to arrange the sound of voices to the correct and natural pitch, and then maybe only five minutes of actual shooting in a whole day. It is indeed a most wonderful, interesting and educational trip behind the scenes of the motion pictures.

THE Civic Federation of Dallas, Texas among the many Institutes and Courses planned for its thoughtful citizens, will in-

clude again this year a series of motion picture showings. This series always receives the serious attention of the Federation's Executive Secretary, Mr. Elmer Scott, for he fully appreciates the cultural and educational value of the motion picture and has for many years, serving since 1917 as a member of the National Advisory Council of the National Board. Foreign and documentary films are most usually shown with some exceptional American films. The program for October offers the French film *Generals Without Buttons*; *The Scoundrel*, (Noel Coward picture) brought back on request; *The Baker's Wife*, exceptional French film; *Life of Verdi*, an Italian film; *A Yudame A Virvir*, an Argentine film in the Spanish language.

LUNCH-HOUR MOVIES" sounds pretty exciting, something quite pleasant to sandwich between a busy morning and an afternoon to follow, perhaps still busier. Not so many people find the time for this excepting the noon-time crowds at the one-hour programs in the news-reel theatres of New York and other cities, where many people find it convenient and pleasant to keep up with the world. But the youngsters in lots of cities are more fortunate, they get their mid-day features. One of the cities particularly interested in this plan is Cleveland. Mr. Samuel E. Davies of the teaching staff of the Emerson Junior High School has written to us about the activity of a Committee of which he is a member, that busied itself this summer in gathering material to be used in selecting "lunch-hour" pictures. That is pictures to be shown in the school auditorium during the noon recess when the weather is too bad for the students to play outside.

Some of the pictures used last year were *To the Victor*, *The 39 Steps*, *Good-bye Mr. Chips*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *Boy's Town*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Mysterious Mr. Reeder*, *Pinocchio*, *The Shop Around the Corner*, *Declaration of Independence*, *Man Without a Country*, *Give Me Liberty* and *The Biscuit Eater*. They expect to keep the same high standard this year. In this they

are aided by the Cleveland Cinema Club which prepared and sent to schools September 1st a list of nearly one hundred and fifty titles of more recent pictures suitable for this purpose. Some are suggested for senior, others for junior high schools, and some recommended only where supplementary to school work. A number of reissues of older features to be made available to schools for the 1941-42 season are also noted.

Motion pictures are used in the Emerson School as well during regular school hours, for Mr. Davies has told us of a series of motion picture appreciation discussions in home-room guidance. A comment in connection with this may be appreciated by those who are interested in children's reactions, for it indicates a viewpoint that may be disappointing but not altogether surprising. When they showed *The Adventures of Chico* he said, most students rated it very highly but suggested that "I would not choose to see it if I could see Blondie, Bing Crosby or the Ritz Brothers instead."

A concrete evidence of the immediate results of motion picture study worth comment has come to our notice. Recently we reported on the indifferent attitude to motion pictures of the girls in one of the sewing classes of young girl workers in the Waterbury (Conn.) Girls' Club. They were not particularly interested in what kind of pictures they saw and could not say whether they liked them or why. All that is changed now, says Miss Kathleen Crowley, Director of the Club, since the classes have been given an opportunity under interested leadership to talk over motion pictures and what to look for in a good picture. Certainly her point is upheld by their vote received on the best pictures of the summer, including as it does such films as *Citizen Kane*, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* and *The Little Foxes*.

After only a very few months of thoughtful motion picture attendance and consideration of the pictures seen a group may become discriminating and articulate. Motion picture appreciation classes need not be limited to the schools. There are groups of many kinds doubtless in all cities where talk-

ing about the movies would be welcomed if Councils would provide some trained leaders.

LETTERS coming to us from Council officers indicate the prevailing wish of both individuals and groups to do some service for somebody, some material service, in addition to the ever important work of providing motion picture information for the community, so it seems timely to report as a fall suggestion the annual Toy and Clothing benefit matinee, sponsored by the Better Films Council of Greater St. Louis (Mo.) in cooperation with 42 neighborhood theatres last October. The theatres and films were given gratis and the services of the operators, stage hands and ushers were also donated. Approximately 35,000 articles of clothing and 5,000 toys were collected for distribution to needy children by the Toy Shop Guild of the Board of Religious Organizations and the Child Conservation Conference. Reviewing committees serving at the cooperating theatres and other Council members and friends volunteered their services for this worthy benefit, assisting the managers in assorting and packing the articles for collection by city, county and trucking companies donating their services.

The children were not alone beneficiaries of this Council's attention, for another service was a Christmas party for guests from the Home for the Aged in the metropolitan area given through the courtesy of Fanchon and Marco, at the Missouri Theatre in December. Members of the Council board and first-run theatre chairmen served as hostesses to approximately 500 appreciative elderly people, reports Mrs. Arretus F. Burt, organizer and honorary president of the Council, and the various committee chairmen working with her.

HOW a club functions as a local unit and also as part of a larger group is shown by Mrs. Henry W. Herbst, Child and Home Chairman of the Northridge (Ill.) Woman's Club, when she tells of making reports of ratings of coming movies at their two suburban theatres using as a reference source the rating of the Better Films Council of Chicagoland in which they have membership.

THE Jacksonville (Fla.) Motion Picture Council devoted its September meeting to a study of noted directors, their individual methods and their characteristics. The members of this group will now be able to answer that question which many people have been known to fail on—Can you name ten outstanding motion picture directors?

LAST month there were reported the visits of various Council members to the offices of the Board in New York City. A few more travelings are recorded to show how the motion picture interest is united through personal contact. Mrs. Elmore Godfrey, Jr. president of the Knoxville (Tenn.) Motion Picture Council visited the National Board and attended a meeting of the Review Committee. Another office visitor was Mr. F. C. Abraham, president of the Cinema Club of Lima (Ohio). Mr. H. W. Adams, a member of the National Advisory Council of the Board since 1918, attorney and former mayor of Beloit, Wisconsin, is planning to call upon Board contacts in California this month, as is Mrs. Frank R. Anderson, president of the Motion Picture Council of Greater Cleveland. Earlier in the summer Mr. Frank S. Phillips, a member of the Advisory Board of the Rochester Film Council, expressed his wish to talk with Board members when studying motion pictures in Hollywood.

Another item about personalities reported upon last month that can be added to this month is the re-election of Council presidents. Some of those whose past valuable service has been recognized through again being inducted into the presidency are: Mrs. O. D. Bartlett, Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee; Mrs. William A. Burk, Southern California Motion Picture Council; Mr. John O. Chapman, Lincoln (Nebraska) Better Films Council; Miss Elsie Clanahan, East St. Louis (Ill.) Better Films Council; Mrs. V. J. Guthery, Charlotte (N. C.) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Richard K. Jones, Cleveland (Ohio) Cinema Club; Mrs. B. F. Reed, Milwaukee County (Wisconsin) Better Films Council; Mrs. Joseph L. White, Montclair (N. J.) Motion Picture Council. Some who have recently assumed the

presidency for the first time in their Councils are: Mrs. William Hanson, Springfield (Mass.) Motion Picture Council; Dr. O. E. Harrell, Jacksonville Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Jacob M. Lashly, St. Louis Better Films Council; Mrs. Nicholas Lodwick, Cincinnati Motion Picture Council.

A Motion picture study series "Facts and Opinions About the Motion Picture" consisting of eight subjects, one each month October through May, by the National Council of the Board, is announced for Councils and other study groups. The paper "History of the Motion Picture" is now available. The series cost is 75c, or if ordered separately 10c each paper.

The 20th annual "Selected Book-Films" list including the pictures from October 1940 to October 1941 based upon published sources or especially related to reading is now ready in time to plan for Book Week, November 2nd to 8th.

Mindful of books it may be well to mention again the recently compiled list of "Books on the Motion Picture," covering seventy-five titles by subject arrangement.

Each of these lists is priced at 10c, free to subscribers who request them.

THE Y.M.C.A. Motion Picture Bureau, distributing films for non-theatrical use to a wide public for thirty years, has come to know the difficulties experienced by those attempting to find the appropriate film. Mr. George J. Zehrung, Director of the Bureau, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board, has shown us the Bureau's new "Classified Film List" which has been arranged in a way to lessen these difficulties. It combines a list of titles under subjects and an order form. Here in one line is your title, reels, space for date required and price if one. Many of the films are free. Some of the subject headings are "Civics and History," "Fine and Industrial Arts," "Health and Safety." There are eight in all. If you wish a complete set of the eight they will be sent without charge, Mr. Zehrung says. Address the Bureau, 347 Madison Avenue, New York City.

JUNIOR INTERESTS

"THE MOVIES AS AN AID TO TOLERANCE"

by Joan Kaufman

Evander Childs High School
Motion Picture Club, New York City

TODAY the motion picture plays an important role in the lives of all of us—from very young children to those who saw the advent of the film industry. It is both a social and an educational force, and today, when national defense is so important and so necessary, films should be produced to bring to all of us the knowledge necessary to enable us to better fulfill our duty in helping our nation. First and foremost it is our duty to be good Americans, to be proud of our country and its traditions, and also to be tolerant of the many nationalities of which it is made.

If the children are shown certain nationalities always placed in a ridiculous light, the children, whose young minds easily absorb prejudices and yet find them hard to destroy, will feel in many ways superior to those races. When coming in contact with American-born children of foreign races in school, they will employ methods of intolerance, un-American methods, in spreading false ideas given them by motion pictures. An example of this would be the Greek race, often derided as an ignorant race of restaurant proprietors. It has suddenly become prominent in fighting for its rights, and only now is the film industry banning "typing" of the race.

German people are portrayed as a grim, cruel race, as in the film *Four Sons* or any one of scores of other propaganda films. It is understood that this is a just portrayal of the Nazi Party, but it is the school child, son of German parents, who bears the brunt of unfair torments.

The Italians are often shown as ignorant, clumsy people, never seeming to be able to master the English language. Wasn't it an Italian, Michelangelo, who created some of the most beautiful masterpieces of art in the world and who was a fervent believer in democracy? How often are the famous Italian authors or patriots shown?

The American Indian, who had more of a right to America than we, is shown as a cruel heartless race. When the Indians killed white people, it was known as a massacre, but when the situation was reversed, the incident was known as a battle.

The Oriental often aroused fear because he was shown slithering about with a dagger hidden in his sleeve. Charlie Chan shows that an Oriental can also be a philosopher, and today much is being done to alleviate injustice to these cultured races.

Two of the more widely discussed prejudices in this country are those against the Negro and the Jew.

The Negro is shown as an eternally frightened foil for a comedian's jokes, or as a lazy, laugh-provoking porter. A feature film based on the lives of Booker T. Washington or George Washington Carver would lead many to better respect this fine race and perhaps would help end some of the injustices in the South.

The Jewish faith in this nation is much understood since the inception of persecution in Nazi Germany. Many actors, Maurice Moskovitch for instance, have recently given true portrayals of this faith.

A film such as *That Night in Rio* neglects all the cultural activities of our Pan-American neighbors in order to accomplish one purpose—earning money and drawing a crowd. Musicals accomplish this purpose, and that is all. The picture was not intended to give a mistaken idea about our neighbors to the south. At this time, however, it would have been to much greater advantage to acquaint us with the customs, and not only the amusements of our fellow democracies.

Tolerance must be practiced in order to become more than theory, and it is to this purpose that movies should be mobilized. They should present to us a true picture of all the nationalities that make up our country so that the younger generation can carry on the principles of democracy so important to the existence of our nation, and so that the adults may aid their children in becoming good American citizens.

"OUR CLUB ACTIVITIES"

by William Foster

Mark Twain Junior High School Club
Brooklyn, N. Y.

THIS term the Four Star Motion Picture Club of Mark Twain Junior High School has reached a membership of 90, under the leadership of a born comedian and enthusiast of motion pictures. Our popular president is aided by the award of eight passes each week provided by our three local theatres. Each month our club is invited to one of these theatres, and about sixty members are able to attend. On membership cards, our efficient secretary very faithfully records the receiving of passes and the attendance at the monthly pictures.

We are able to prove our appreciation of the help of the local managers in a very active, substantial manner. Theatre posters are placed on our hall bulletin boards and newsletters are distributed for posting in each classroom. For special occasions, announcements are presented to every pupil in our large school. We are using increasing care to see that no material is distributed that a visiting school official could criticize.

For the pictures, *Arizona* and *Virginia*; a committee judged contest maps and questionnaires, and we are very proud to distribute the reward passes to the satisfaction of the theatres and the pupils.

As we continue to be thrilled by motion pictures, we realize that we are developing greater understanding and keener judgment in our choice of pictures, that many pupils are learning to express their ideas before a friendly group on a subject that is dear to them, and that our school and community are looking to us as responsible leaders in the study of the great art of the motion picture. A steadfast alumni group carries on after graduation from our school.

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The above talks are a continuation from the September issue of the reporting of the Fifth Annual Spring Conference

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"Ten Best" Contest

EVERY 4-Star Club should have each individual member write down the ten pictures he or she most enjoyed during the year; the member's name and age *must* appear on the list.

All lists *must* be in the office of the National Board of Review by *Monday, December 1st*.

All lists are then tabulated and the ten pictures receiving the greatest number of votes become the junior "Ten Best Pictures of 1941."

As in other years, the members whose individual lists come closest to this final list will be awarded prizes of properties from the winning films.

The Young Reviewers on:

"TANKS A MILLION"

THE Young Reviewers recently gave a favorable reception to the Hal Roach featurette, *Tanks A Million*, although they sneered a bit at comedies in general and offered some suggestions for an improved propaganda. Their ballots rated the picture as follows: Excellent—9, Very Good—12, Good—5, and Fair—2. But 21 votes were cast against there being anything worth remembering or thinking about in the picture. The other 7 were happy to learn a little more about army life, regulations and ranks. They found the plot very funny but with reservations. "Impossible, but very amusing," said a girl,

11. "It was humorous but unlike actual camp life," from a girl, 13. A boy, 14, thought "the plot could have been a little better—some parts of the film were very silly. You could see that it's all a script." This same boy said that the scenery, which consisted of typical frame barracks on a treeless plain, "could have been a little better—it was a little empty." The majority recommended the film for everyone although "young children" were singled out on four ballots.

On the subject of double features, one boy, 13, spoke for all when he said "When you go to see a double feature, you see one good picture and one hammy one." When the leader suggested that people generally don't consider this, he admitted

that it was so. "When I go to a movie, I like to see one picture that is serious," said a girl, 12. "Children like to see two pictures," said a boy, 14. The leader, a girl of 13, said that the ordinary public isn't particular about the kind of pictures it sees and no one disputed this.

One girl, 12, expressed the wish to see a picture that had to do with school work so that she might learn from it, but this brought down a round of criticism. "If they made regular movies and put school things in, first of all the things they put in aren't always agreed with by your teacher, and grown-ups wouldn't like it and it wouldn't be good for sales," (girl, 12). "When you go to a movie you don't go to learn about school. You go to forget about school," (girl, 13). "If you want to learn, you should go to a museum," (girl, 12). They mentioned some of the films shown them in school but admitted they were very boring as a rule. But that was education.

On the subject of acting in comedies, they had a lot to say. "I would say the acting was fair. It can't compare to a real dramatic picture," (girl, 13). "In a comedy one doesn't usually notice the acting but usually notices the incidents, but I think in most pictures you will find better acting," (boy, 13). Then love was mentioned. "When you go to a picture and see love connected with a comedy, it has to be a funny love or else it won't go," (girl, 12). "The Marx Brothers and the Ritz Brothers always have a serious love interest and that spoils it," (girl, 12). "If they do put love in it, the characters aren't so good for love, and if they put people in who can do love, they aren't good for comedy," (boy, 13). A girl, 11, noted that "you are less likely to remember a comedy."

They then had a little debate as to whether this film was good propaganda or not, with the negative side winning by a shade. In this case, their definition of propaganda would seem to imply pro-army or anti-army rather than any more potent departure. "I think all these pictures make the draft and the army seem very bad. All the stuff about a bad sergeant and a tough

Company F and a very strict person like the general would be bad for boys going into the army to see. It is not only in this picture. *Caught in the Draft* too. I don't think they make an army look so good. I think it isn't good propaganda for the U.S.A., if the U.S.A. wants propaganda," (boy, 11). "I think he is right. They should have something different. It is better to make the army more serious," (girl, 13). But another girl, 13, said "I think it would make good propaganda because it would make the people think that it isn't so serious and that the draftees also have some fun but that it is serious when you have to work." In defense of the film, a girl, 13, said "I think they should continue those pictures because why shouldn't we see what Uncle Sam is doing to protect us." "I would much rather see a picture about the draft than about the army that was fighting—something funny, not shooting," (boy, 12). "A boy who sees a picture like this would want to go (into the army: Ed.) for the humor," (girl, 12).

Toward the end of the meeting, the following dialogue occurred: Girl, 12: "I would like to know how the sergeant got demoted to a paperpicker because he angered the colonel. There is no such law in the army that would let the colonel do that." Leader: "A colonel is a colonel." Boy, 11: "I know—and if anybody keeps pestering a colonel, I'm sure he would at least be reduced to a private." Girl, 8: "Sometimes when soldiers don't do the right thing, something is done to them like they have to peel apples or potatoes or something like that." Girl, 12: "I don't see how the colonel could have the right to change a man who has been in the army for twenty years." Leader: "Don't you know how a movie exaggerates?" Same girl, 12: "But after all, such exaggeration!" Boy, 11: "You don't know the army." The Young Reviewers seem to be concerned about the tendency toward dictatorship in our own army. As usual the meeting had to close because of the hour, although the enthusiasm for discussion of movies was still at a very high tide.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

The hunt for the body and the readjustment of the hero to new situations and old friends provides hilarious moments alternating with passages of depth and emotional potency. When the pitfalls that such a film of its nature has lying open for it are considered it comes home to one that this delightful picture for all its freshness and apparent effortlessness is a remarkable compound of taste and cinematic art which reflects no small glory on the director, the star and the rest of the people who made it. Columbia.

- f ***IT STARTED WITH EVE**—Deanna Durbin, Charles Laughton, Robert Cummings. Original screen story by Hans Kraly. Directed by Henry Koster. Here's a light, happy, piece in which Miss Durbin gives up some of her adolescence to become a man-chasing comedienne and Mr. Laughton forsakes the evil sneer to portray a whimsical, crotchety old tycoon with a propensity for playing Cupid. She is called on to fill in for Cummings' fiancée in the last moments of the tycoon's rich life. But, upon seeing Deanna, the old gent has the bad grace to revive, placing his son in a true dilemma. From there, the picture skips along at a merry clip until Deanna is installed as the real fiancée, by dint of Laughton's efforts chiefly. The performances are all joyful but Laughton stands out for the many eccentric little mannerisms he thinks up. Koster's direction also contributes in making the film such an infectious comedy. Universal.

- f ***KU KAN**—Photographed and written by Rey Scott. Prologue by Lin Yutang. This is the very best sort of a travelogue made by an American correspondent on a trip into the interior of China with a color camera. The photography is understandably crude and the color often unsatisfactory but the unity of his material and the emergence of a dramatic theme of China itself, a nation bogged down by out-moded traditions but making the necessary transition to a modern power engaging in a long war, is splendid. One feels the birth of the New China as the small farmers take up arms or turn to factory work. The determined effort of the whole country is caught in the scenes of the constant reconstruction of the Burma Road by thousands of willing laborers. Mr. Scott filmed the old China as well as the new, the men on the battle-front as well as those in the dim interior, and climaxes his story with the bombing of Chungking which illumines China's plight unforgettably. It is very complete and has a definite point to make without ever overstepping the bounds. It would be fortunate indeed if all non-fictional documentaries of warring nations could plead a cause with equal scope, eloquence and tempered grace. Adventure Films.

- m ***THE LITTLE FOXES**—Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall. Based on the play by Lillian

Hellman. Directed by William Wyler. A film not apt to be helpful when you need cheering but an unusually fine movie nevertheless. Miss Davis rather outdoes herself as the selfish, heartless creature bent on getting a large corner of this world's goods no matter who suffers. And the rest of the characters are all decisively drawn and enacted to give the film an urgency that is enthralling in spite of the repellant qualities of the tale itself. But a guilt-edged production cannot quite cover over the fact that it is adapted from the stage, in spots it's very talky. In the sequences, however, that escape too much dialogue the film has a fine cinematic sweep. This is one of the better pictures that afford Miss Davis the opportunity to show us how terrifying a lady can be when she makes up her mind. RKO—Radio.

- f ***'SMILIN' THROUGH**—Jeanette MacDonald, Brian Aherne, Gene Raymond, Ian Hunter. Based on the play by Jane Cowl, Jane Murn. Directed by Frank Borzage. A new version of the tearful period piece dressed to kill in Technicolor, elaborate sets, songs and a fancy cast. The film follows rather faithfully the scenario of the Norma Shearer movie of several years back, but Miss Shearer did not have to take time out so often to deliver a song. Then, too, this film has inserted in it several stirring sentiments about Britain, no doubt with an eye to timeliness. A lavish, slow moving, well acted movie with fair color, it will appeal chiefly to folks who like their romance with no holds barred. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f ***THE STORY OF THE VATICAN**—A good documentation of the civic, religious and artistic activities of Vatican City made by the March of Time. By means of fine photography and an eloquent narrative by Monsignor Fulton Sheen of Catholic University the background, history, points of artistic interest and the daily life of the people in the smallest sovereign state in the world are unfolded in an interesting fashion. The various high personages in the papal household come before the camera's eye as well as its precious libraries and art galleries and all the modern departments needed to run the city and preserve the perishable treasures that enrich it as a center of culture and learning. The formal sight-seeing, familiar enough for those whose wont it was to trapse about Europe in the good old days, for all their interest are less impressive than the workshops, laboratories and markets—even the tiny bar that offers vermouth as its most potent jollification—of the modern town. The film has besides these sights a definite value in drawing a proper picture of a unique principality which daily plays an important role in the affairs of war-torn Europe and governs a spiritual realm of many millions of souls everywhere. Recommended for schools, libraries and church use. RKO-Radio.

- f ***SUN VALLEY SERENADE**—Sonja Henie, John Payne, Milton Berle. Original screen

story by Art Arthur and Robert Harari. Directed by H. Bruce Humberstone. A cheerful comedy romance with gay music by Glenn Miller's band and skiing and skating lightly attached to a fragile plot about a perky little refugee from Norway who sets about stealing a young musician from the sultry songstress with whom he thinks he is in love. As fluffy as an old-fashioned musical comedy, and as enjoyable. One of the virtues of the picture is that it gives Miss Henie a chance to do something else besides skate, and she appears as a very pleasant acting personality. 20th Century-Fox.

m *SUSPICION — Cary Grant, Joan Fontaine, Nigel Bruce. Based on the novel "Before the Fact" by Francis Iles. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. A handsome and thrilling picture, enriched by the art of a famous director who lives up to his reputation of producing startling films and breath-taking cinematic effects. Mr. Grant and Miss Fontaine play their parts full tilt, aided by a very distinguished supporting cast and the attractive accoutrements and scenery of the English counties in time of peace. The plot is the steadily built up suspicion of a lovely young woman for her dashing irresponsible husband, first, because of a series of coincidences, that he is involved in the mysterious death of his best friend and finally that he intends to murder her. The story is so well told that all obviousnesses are swept from mind by its tautness and suspense and the gripping fear that Miss Fontaine manages beautifully to get across. RKO-Radio.

f *TANKS A MILLION — William Tracy, James Gleason, Noah Beery, Jr., Joe Sawyer. Original screen story by Paul Gerard Smith, Warren Wilson, Edward E. Seabrook. Directed by Fred Guiol. A rib-tickling tale of a bright young man inducted into our new army and the alarming effects of his punctilious enthusiasm to become a good soldier. The writing and direction hark back to the classic silent comedies and make this a film of unwonted freshness and speed. It is the first of a series of short feature films to be produced by Hal Roach and bodes well for those that are to follow it. Most of the action (and it rarely needs dialogue so adroit is the director in presenting the story in terms proper to cinema) lies in the hands of Messrs. Tracy, Gleason and Sawyer and they handle their parts with intelligence and dexterity. It is one of the best of the army-inspired films. United Artists.

f *YOU'LL NEVER GET RICH—Fred Astaire, Rita Hayworth, Robert Benchley. Original screen story by Michael Fesslier, Ernest Pagano. Directed by Sidney Lanfield. A song and dance film with music by Cole Porter taking camp life among the selectees of the army for background and an army show for the grand finale. Compared with the old Astaire-Rogers films this lacks the sparkle and verve we have come to expect, but Fred does some very nice dance routines and Miss Hayworth in a routine role is intelligent, charming

and a delightful dancer. Most of his time in this very improbable camp Fred spends in the guard house, chiefly for the usual Hollywood notions of infraction of army rules, but he is temporarily released to direct the big musical that the boys are putting on. He does this to applause in spite of the difficulties that Benchley provides for him as the aging Lothario with a jealous wife. As for the music—it's very smart. Columbia.

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

m AMONG THE LIVING — Albert Dekker, Susan Hayward, Harry Carey. Original screen story by Brian Marlow and Lester Cole. Directed by Stuart Heisler. Handled differently, this blood-curdling story of murder and insanity might have been ridiculous, but, with careful acting and fine direction which wallows in the terror of the tale, it gains a steam-roller potency. It seems there were twins, one of whom has inherited wealth and position while the other has been kept in a cellar, insane, with his faked death certificate in the town registry. The madman escapes and leaves a wide wake of blood behind which is ironically blamed on the sane twin. The ending is satisfactory but the high point is the brilliant chase of the madman. Paramount.

fj APACHE KID, THE — Don "Red" Barry, Lynn Merrick. Original screen story by Elliot Gibbons and Richard Murphy. Directed by George Sherman. A good clean western with the per formula gang of villains and the enormously resourceful hero to protect the honest folk. Don does a stimulating job of clearing up the mess and wins a pretty bride. Al St. John has sparse comedy bits to do and does them very well. As usual the riding is swell and the gunplay remarkably ineffective. Republic.

f BADLANDS OF DAKOTA—Robert Stack, Frances Farmer, Ann Rutherford, Richard Dix. Original screen story by Harold Shumate. Directed by Alfred E. Green. This is a bigger western, with quite a well worked out plot of two brothers in Deadwood, S. Dakota, during the earliest days of its statehood. After a fight over a woman, the two take the familiar paths, one becoming a bad-man in league with the "Injuns" while the other becomes sheriff. There is good reconstruction of period sets and original dialogue, plus a very good performance by Miss Farmer as the backwoods gun-toter who goes unappreciated. Also, there is a lot of action, even if it is pretty familiar stuff. Universal.

f BELLE STARR—Randolph Scott, Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews. Original screen story by Niven Busch and Cameron Rogers. Directed by Irving Cummings. Laid in Missouri after the Civil War, the story revolves around a girl who will not admit the Confederate cause to be lost, and a Southern Captain, the leader of guerilla fighters, whom she marries. The background of carpetbaggers and unflinching Confederate valor and pride

are well depicted and the cast does a good job. The weak point lies chiefly in the writing. But far and away the production is excellent in its splendid use of color; it is one of the most exquisite and successful color films yet made. And Miss Tierney is almost breathtaking in her loveliness before the color camera. A very enjoyable film, having a quantity of pathos and several very moving sequences, and a lavish feast for the eyes besides. 20th-Century-Fox.

- f BIRTH OF THE BLUES, THE — Bing Crosby, Mary Martin, Brian Donlevy. Original screen story by Harry Tugent. Directed by Victor Scherfzinger. Despite good intentions and splendid material, this musical isn't as fine as it should be. The title is a misnomer for it really traces the white man's gratuitous adoption of hot jazz and its first assaults on the respectable niteries of New Orleans. Nevertheless, there is the folksy Bing singing old-timers with his peculiar lilt, there are some hot-licks with a pedigree from the band, there is Rochester giving as good a lecture as possible on how to sing the blues, and, last but not least, there is Ruby Elzy singing the St. Louis Blues beautifully. It's good, very good, but not quite as big as the title. Paramount.

- f BOMBAY CLIPPER — William Gargan, Irene Hervey. Original screen story by Roy Chansler and Stanley Rubin. Directed by John Rawlins. A sustained pace is the most necessary ingredient of these mystery pictures which introduce diamonds the size of golf balls, and this chase keeps moving in fine fashion. There are one or two tidy murders and any number of sinister people on the plane along with the diamonds so that Mr. Gargan, one of those married reporters who loves work more than the wife, gets a fine story. It isn't wholly credible but it entertains. Universal.

- f BUY ME THAT TOWN — Lloyd Nolan, Constance Moore, Albert Dekker, Sheldon Leonard. Original screen story by Harry Gourfain, Murray Bollinos and Arthur Bracken. Directed by Eugene Forde. Lloyd Nolan buys a bankrupt town and sets up a good business of holding people who don't want to be called up for investigations at the moment in jail at a boarding fee of a thousand dollars a week. But a girl wins the hardy racketeer to more civic ventures and all ends for the good of the town and the good of Mr. Nolan's soul. A pleasant comedy with good performances all round. Paramount.

- f CHARLIE CHAN IN RIO—Sidney Toler, Mary Beth Hughes, Sen Yung. Based on the character created by Earl Derr Biggers. Directed by Harry Lachman. A good further adventure of the series. Charlie, having run down in Rio a murderess whom he had followed from Honolulu, arrives at her house to find a double murder for him to solve. In his classic fashion he finesses the criminal into a confession while his Number 2 son is kept

fairly out of the way by being provided with a very pretty Chinese maid. Not a very clever mystery, but right pleasant entertainment in a light way. 20th-Century-Fox.

- f DOCTORS DON'T TELL—John Beal, Florence Rice, Edward Norris. Original screen story by Theodore Reeves. Directed by Jacques Tourneur. Stories of medical ethics wherein aspiring doctors are tempted by racketeers to remove a bullet or two but not report it to the police are fairly common in films but they still hold the attention as taut dramas. Beal and Norris are the two doctors in this, the former contenting himself with an honest but unspectacular practice while the latter yields to the lure of gangster money. The ethics of the situation are well debated herein and the performances of stereotyped parts are nevertheless sincerely handled. Republic.

- f DR. KILDARE'S WEDDING DAY — Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Nils Asther, Laraine Day. Original screen story by Ormond Ruthven and Lawrence P. Bachman. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. There is a sad surprise in this episode in young Dr. Kildare's life, one of the most crucial in his career. One of the most heart-warming of the series, with Lionel Barrymore at his mellowest—and incidentally revealing himself as a good composer (in his own person) with a symphonic suite. Music plays an important part in the picture. Metro.

- f DOWN IN SAN DIEGO—Bonita Granville, Ray McDonald, Dan Dailey, Jr. Based on a story by Franz G. Spencer. Directed by Robert B. Sinclair. A group of teen-age kids turn sleuth in and around the San Diego marine base to save Bonita's older brother. It seems that the brother took one bad step and the rest was easy, getting right in with awesome foreign agents, but of course he repents just before a heroic death. In spite of what this sounds like, the picture is neatly timed, has some comic snap and is acted by a bright bunch of juveniles. Metro.

- f DUDE COWBOY—Tim Holt, Marjorie Reynolds, Ray Whitley. Original screen story by Morton Grant. Directed by David Howard. The western formula is side-stepped a bit by introducing elements of a mystery with counterfeit bills turning up made by a kidnapped government engraver. Question: what relation has this engraver with the owner of the Silver City Saloon, from which the faked money is issuing? Cowboy Holt, with a mild comic and Mr. Whitley's yodeling, uncovers the villains, of course, in a deserted mine with a fitting amount of gunplay. It's satisfying if not epoch-making. RKO Radio.

- f FATHER TAKES A WIFE—Gloria Swanson, Adolphe Menjou. Original screen story by Dorothy and Herbert Fields. Directed by Jack Hively. Seeing this film is as pleasant a way to spend an evening as you're likely to find in a movie house. It's no great work of cinema art, it has a readily recognized plot,

there are even some spots that let down a bit after a splendid beginning, but Miss Swanson retains all her charm and attractiveness and Mr. Menjou shows again what a good entertainer can do no matter what the part. Besides, Desi Arnaz sings a few songs prettily and is amusing in a minor part. RKO Radio.

f **FLYING CADETS**—Edmund Lowe, William Gargan, Frank Albertson, Peggy Moran. Original screen story by Joseph West, Roy Chanslor, Stanley Rubin. Directed by Erle C. Kenton. A famous World War aviator helps out his young brother and his old pal by becoming an instructor at their aviation school. Complications arise when the son he has never seen becomes a student. The picture's emphasis is on the training required to turn out fliers and the glamor of flying itself. A good picture of its type that keeps a steady hold on one's interest. Universal.

f **GAY FALCON, THE** — George Sanders, Wendy Barrie, Allen Jenkins. Based on the story by Michael Arlen. Directed by Irving Reis. George Sanders is casting off the garments of the Saint to appear as Gay Laurence, known to his reading public as the Falcon. He is a devil with the women and a magnet for murders, as of yore, but in this first of a new series he has become even more sophisticated to the point of kidding mysteries and himself delightfully. The story here concerns murders around the Monsoon Diamond which was stolen at one of the many parties of Maxine Wood, professional hostess. It isn't a great story but is satisfactory for this informal type of picture. RKO Radio.

f **GLAMOUR BOY** — Jackie Cooper, Susanna Foster. Original screen story by Bradford Ropes and Val Burton. Directed by Ralph Murphy. A very amusing satire on the ways of Hollywood and picture making and the fate of a has-been child actor. The cast in general does a fine job and Miss Foster sings prettily. It is a fairly fast moving film spiked with fetching gags and a very funny kidnap episode that finally puts everything to rights. Neither particularly original nor top-flight, it has a sound treatment and an honestly written script that prove very satisfying. There are several shots of the first edition of "Skippy" that give the film a nostalgic note to leaven its hair-brained moments. Paramount.

f **GREAT GUNS**—Laurel and Hardy. Original screen story by Lou Breslow. Directed by Montague Banks. The sad-faced pair of comics are back again, this time in a mild service farce in which they enlist in a cavalry unit just to be near their former employer. The employer, a wealthy lad of supposedly delicate constitution, becomes a great devotee of the army life and together with his two nit-wit companions he saves the Army Whites in a practice maneuver. Laurel and Hardy are good buffoons with very expressive faces but it is too bad they couldn't receive a little better script and some speedier direction. Still, it's good to have them back. 20th Century-Fox.

fj **HENRY ALDRICH FOR PRESIDENT** — Jimmy Lydon. Original screen story by Val Burton, sequel to the Clifford Goldsmith Henry Aldrich Stories. Directed by Hugh Bennett. A pleasant juvenile comedy laid in such a high school as n'er was seen, drawing its drama from an election for class president in which the young hero is accused of cheating and is expelled. The latter sequence dealing with Henry's first solo plane flight is very funny and lifts the film out of the ordinary formula school picture. Jimmy Lydon comes through with a delightful performance as the over-imaginative and unlucky youngster whose innocent projects have such results as may well whiten his parents' hair before their time. Paramount.

m **HONKY TONK**—Clark Gable, Lana Turner, Frank Morgan. Original screen story by Marguerite Roberts and John Sanford. Directed by Jack Conway. Gable has the swaggering Rhett Butler part down pat now and who cares if he does repeat it—it's still good. In this, he can make a sucker of anyone west of the Rockies, including the town in Nevada which he fleeces thoroughly. But he strikes a snag with Lana, a Boston blue-blood who happens to be as smart as himself. It's a rousing action picture, neatly written, skillfully cast and swiftly paced, although Lana seems just a bit shaky opposite the master. The one drawback is that a film, so frankly a Gable show-piece, can't be great art *per se*. Metro.

f **ICE CAPADES**—Dorothy Lewis, James Ellison, Jerry Colonna. Original screen story by Isabel Dawn and Boyce De Gaw. Directed by Joseph Santley. Actually, this film reduces to little more than a series of specialty acts done on the ice, strung together with the sort of sugary plot one expects of such musicals. The acts are good, however, introducing many competent skaters to the screen, and they are interspersed at times with the breezy antics of Vera Vague and Mr. Colonna. It is perhaps just as well to overlook the romance and plot in this type of picture and concentrate on the good novelty acts. Republic.

f **KID FROM KANSAS, THE**—Dick Foran, Leo Carillo, Andy Devine. Original screen story by Griffin Jay. Directed by William Nigh. Murder, dynamite and poison are the weapons selected by one banana plantation owner against another in this tropic isle but Dick Foran, the man mentioned in the title, uncovers the plot before all the crops are ruined. The picture seems to have been done a little haphazardly but this gives it surprising bounce, and Foran plays and sings in just the right spirit. The plantation background is of considerable interest. Universal.

f **LADY BE GOOD** — Ann Sothern, Robert Young, Eleanor Powell. Original screen story by Jack McGowan. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. Like most screen musicals, this film doesn't know when to stop, but it contains much pleasant and tuneful entertainment, with

Ann Sothern peppering up the proceedings immensely. It concerns the ups-and-downs in the marriage of two song writers, he does the music, she the words. Red Skelton adds a good deal of comedy, and Eleanor Powell contributes a couple of dances. New songs are added to those from the old Broadway show. Metro.

- f LAW OF THE TROPICS** — Constance Bennett, Jeffrey Lynn. Based on the book by Alice Tisdale Hobart. Directed by Ray Enright. It all happens on a rubber plantation in South America. There Mr. Lynn brings a girl wanted by the police (Mr. Lynn does not know this until later) to act as his wife after the real girl friend jilted him. The pair fall in love but happiness fades as the law catches up with the young woman and takes her back to the States. The film is a fairly good romance with a seasoning of the good neighbor policy and a social comment on the loyalty of employees to an impersonal corporation. The ending is satisfactory. Warner Bros.
- f LIFE BEGINS FOR ANDY HARDY** — Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland. Original screen story by Agnes Christine Johnston. Directed by George B. Seitz. Andy comes to New York for a month to get a job and make up his mind whether to keep it and be on his own or to go to college and become a lawyer. Parental grief at losing their boy is varied with the troubles and timid passions of Andy in the clutches of the big town, where the fascinations of a breezy telephone operator and the homely affection of Judy Garland give him chills and fevers. The picture has several inane passages and is entirely too long. But no one can deny its ethical value in setting up temptations for the hero to overcome as indeed he does every time. Incidentally he goes off to college. So his daddy is quite happy at the finish. Metro.
- m LYDIA** — Merle Oberon, Edna May Oliver, Alan Marshal, Hans Yarrow. Original screen story by L. Bush-Fekete and Julien Duvivier. Directed by Julien Duvivier. Lydia is an aging spinster caught by the camera wallowing in the rich memories of her youth where they touched on one or another of the four men in her life. All loved this lovely, tempestuous, many-faceted girl, but she lost her heart to the one who forgot her. The faults of the film are few but large—the make-up, mounting and the length. The direction, music, camera-work and a few of the performances, however, are magnificent. Regarded uncritically, the film would be captivating but one wishes Miss Oberon were as many-faceted as the script indicates. United Artists.
- f MR. CELEBRITY** — Buzzy Henry, James Seay, Doris Day. Original screen story by Martin Mooney and Charles Samuels. Directed by William Beaudine. An unpretentious but surprisingly entertaining story of the struggle between his grandparents and his uncle for the guardianship of a small boy whose passion is horses and horse-racing. Interesting episodes are provided by the appearance of Clara Kimball Young, Francis X. Bushman and Jim Jeffries as themselves, talking about their days of fame. Producers Releasing Corporation.
- f NIAGARA FALLS**—Marjorie Woodworth, Tom Brown, Slim Summerville, ZaSu Pitts. Original screen story by Paul Gerard Smith, Hal Yates and Eugene Conrad. Directed by Gordon Douglas. This is the second Hal Roach featurette designed for double billing. It's a speedy, light-weight farce, admirably acted and directed, about two couples, one married and one pair of complete strangers who get registered in bridal suites at a Niagara Falls hotel. In its cutting and its delight in disregarding reality, it also harks back to the classic short comedies of the silent era. United Artists.
- f NIGHT OF JANUARY 16TH, THE**—Robert Preston, Ellen Drew, Nils Asther. Based on the play by Ayn Rand. Directed by William Clemens. A nice neat murder mystery with a good cast and a movie-wise director. When a financier is murdered and dropped from his pent-house apartment (a suite that's super even for Hollywood) and 20 million is found missing from his corporation, all the evidence points to his pretty young secretary. The drama hangs on the efforts made by her and a young man to clear herself and run down the real murderer and it makes right fast and amusing adventure. Paramount.
- f NINE LIVES ARE NOT ENOUGH** — Ronald Reagan, Joan Perry, James Gleason. Based on the novel by Jerome Odlum. Directed by A. Edward Sutherland. This is a typical programmer of the mystery school. Wealthy man is found murdered in a cheap boarding house next door to a crook's nest. A chorine, an eerie chauffeur, a nervous landlady, a witless brute, and slick financier are all suspects to be questioned by the cub reporter, making good together with Gleason and Edward Brophy as flatfoot boobies. It's swift and whenever the story sags a bit there is injected some traditionally effective slapstick. This is good of its kind. Warner Bros.
- f NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH**—Bob Hope, Paulette Goddard, Edward Arnold. Based on the play by James Montgomery. Directed by Elliott Nugent. A delightful remake of the play that gets its laugh from the fact that the hero has bet some ruthless friends of his ten thousand dollars that he can tell the truth for twenty-four hours. Mr. Hope is at his best in this film and is well put upon by his light-minded (to put it mildly) girl friend, Miss Goddard, and the conscienceless Mr. Arnold and his confreres, all of whom have a stake in the bet and aim to win by fair means or foul. For a laugh-happy hour and a half this movie should fill the bill for anyone. Paramount.

- f OUR WIFE—Melvyn Douglass, Ruth Hussey, Ellen Drew, Charles Coburn. Original screen story by Lillian Day and Lyon Mearson. Directed by John M. Stahl. The film presents a tug-o-war between snailpaced direction and a superb cast with the latter dragging it over the line as entertainment. The story is not particularly good either, but the dialogue is well written and beautifully handled by the players. Another good point in the film is the beautiful and costly production it has been given. With generous cutting the movie would be enhanced no end. Despite the title, *Our Wife* will offend nobody's moral sensibilities. Columbia.
- f PITTSBURGH KID, THE—Billy Conn, Jean Parker. Based on the novel "Kid Tinsel" by Octavus Roy Cohen. Directed by Jack Townley. The death of his manager on the day of his first important fight throws Billy Conn into the danger of being managed by a rather reckless gentleman as far as his fighters go. The scheme is snarled however when Miss Parker, much against the pug's will, manages him under the contract she inherited from her father. There's an accidental death in the film too that Conn's blamed for but his little manageress gets him out of that. In the end he wins the championship and the lady. The fight sequences will please the fans and are quite nicely done for those not addicted to the ring. Mr. Conn is inexpert as an actor but pleasing enough. Republic.
- f QUIET WEDDING — Margaret Lockwood, Derek Farr. Based on a play by Esther McCracken. Directed by Anthony Asquith. In spite of the bombings England is receiving (a prologue tells us the studio was bombed five times during this production) they still can turn their efforts to the most airy comedy. This has nothing for plot but the stupid details of a church wedding which all but convert any bride to spinsterhood. Not a relative, not a gift of cut-glass is left out of the picture and it becomes a delightful satire. It's just froth but it makes its point. Lovers take warning. (British Production) Universal.
- f REMARKABLE MR. KIPPS, THE — Michael Redgrave, Phyllis Calvert, Diana Wynyard. Based on the novel by H. G. Wells. Directed by Carol Reed. This movie is a delicious attack on the snobbery of the English cast system at the start of the century. Young Kipps should always have been just a humble draper but he came into a fortune and tried to clamber into the upper strata of society, only to be done out of his money by some upper-crust fakers. He is returned to his proper sphere therefore, and to real happiness. In the picture are witty direction, shrewd characterizations which are a delight, and careful attention to the ugly period-pieces which passed as handsome furnishings. The story is a satire for thinkers but the rapid scene changes keep it moving. (British Production) 20th Century-Fox.
- f RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE—George Montgomery, Mary Howard. Based on the novel by Zane Grey. Directed by James Tinling. Many versions of this plot have been filmed but this edition has fine scenery and a little more personality than most westerns. Jim Lassiter is hunting for his niece who had been kidnapped some years before. He finds her riding with a band of vigilantes who are up to no good, although the girl herself is right-minded. Lassiter captures the gang of vigilantes, kills the kidnapper and saves the ranch for his chosen one and the latter's little niece. 20th Century-Fox.
- m SKYLARK—Claudette Colbert, Ray Milland, Brian Aherne. Based on the play by Samson Raphaelson. Directed by Mark Sandrich. The good lines of Raphaelson's play have been mixed with some entertaining action to make this drawing-room comedy a very bright movie. It deals with the plight of a wife, married five years, discovering that her husband's advertising business has replaced her as his bosom-companion. But the introduction of the old third corner of a triangle creates a situation in which they have things out, and reach a new, improved understanding. It's pretty slick, if a little long. Paramount.
- f TEXAS—William Holden, Glenn Ford, Claire Trevor. Original screen story by Michael Blackford and Lewis Meltzer. Directed by George Marshall. The title does not introduce an epic eulogy of the state but just locates the setting. Really, this is just a bigger western than most, with a familiar plot about cattle-rustlers cutting in on the large treks to the railroad where the cattle are to be sold. But the details are fresh, some of the acting is first rate, and all of the humor is wise and brittle. Holden and Ford, the two friends who adopt different ethical codes but join hands at the finale, are new to the sagebrush country and are very real. The 1866 style of dentistry is unforgettable. Columbia.
- f THIS WOMAN IS MINE—Franchot Tone, John Carroll, Walter Brennan, Carol Bruce. Based on the novel by Gilbert W. Gabriel. Directed by Frank Lloyd. In 1810 John Jacob Astor sends out a fur trading expedition to Oregon on a ship commanded by a Captain Thorn and places the business side of the venture in the hands of his young manager. All goes well until a girl is found aboard, lured there by one of the river men. Her presence causes difficulties on the ship that finally result in disaster for most of the expedition. A fine workmanlike job, both instructional and dramatic, is the fruit of good direction and deft acting all round. Particular praise must go to Mr. Tone and Mr. Brennan who are at their best. Universal.
- f TWO LATINS FROM MANHATTAN — Joan Davis, Jinx Falkenburg. Original screen story by Albert Duffy. Directed by Charles Barton. A very light comedy about two American girls who get their chance singing in a night club by presenting themselves as a pair of famous Cuban singers (the real ones had been kidnaped). The comedy rests principally

in the hands of Miss Davis and she never disappoints. Several scenes of what goes on in her mind in moments of stress are very funny. The rest is routine stuff not too logically hung together but good enough when seasoned with the star's antics. Columbia.

- fj UNDER FIESTA STARS — Gene Autry, Smiley Burnett. Based on a story by Karl Brown. Directed by Frank McDonald. Gene inherits half a mine together with a young lady who wants to sell her share; this does not lie in accord with the wishes of their dead benefactor who wants the mine worked for the advantage of the ranchers who are employed in working it, so Gene won't sell. The girl hires crooked lawyers to find her a way out and all would come to grief but for the trusty Gene, his right and his six-gun. A normal Autry western with the usual tunes, heroics and sterling virtues. The headstrong lady finally sees things Gene's way. Republic.
- f UNEXPECTED UNCLE — Charles Coburn, Anne Shirley, James Craig. Based on the novel by Eric Hatch. Directed by Peter Godfrey. Mr. Coburn is a likeable millionaire who has renounced his wealth for the happiness of a little man in a trailer camp. The plot centers around his converting a younger tycoon to the same philosophy just to unite him with a shop girl. The comedy elements are as light and harmless as the plot. RKO Radio.
- f UNFINISHED BUSINESS — Robert Montgomery, Irene Dunne, Preston Foster, Eugene Pallette. Original screen story by Eugene Thackrey. Directed by Gregory La Cava. The story of a small-town girl whose love for the charming gentleman she meets on the train to New York almost ruins her later marriage to his brother. A rather improbable story, but so adroitly acted and so smoothly told in a light sophisticated manner, that it emerges as appealing screen entertainment. Particularly fine is Robert Montgomery whose characterization of the young husband is remarkably sincere and moving. Universal.
- f WE GO FAST — Lynn Bari, Alan Curtis, Sheila Ryan. Based on a story by Doug Welch. Directed by William McGann. This is the tale of the friendly rivalry of two motorcycle cops, a pretty waitress in a coffee emporium, and a phony nabob who swindles the local tycoon out of fifty thousand dollars. The film has pep, some good gags and a very adequate cast to balance its weak plot. 20th Century-Fox.
- f WEEK-END IN HAVANA — Alice Faye, Carmen Miranda, Cesar Romero, John Payne. Original screen story by Karl Tunberg and Darrell Ware. Directed by Walter Lang. The adventures of a Macy sales-girl trying to get the worth of the money she has saved up for a tropical cruise. A musical comedy with laughs, a lot of color and sprightly movement, and Carmen Miranda supplying a hot dash of her special kind of flavoring. 20th Century-Fox.
- m WHEN LADIES MEET — Joan Crawford, Robert Taylor, Greer Garson. Based on the play by Rachel Crothers. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. Miss Crothers' comedy dealt with four young and rich moderns, two married and two who wanted to be, and with their meeting, getting all entangled with love affairs and then rationally arguing it all out on a week-end in Connecticut. This filmic re-make retains all of the dialogue but has lost much of the comedy. The stars prefer to take it too seriously. However, there are lots of super-gowns and a handful of interiors that are just spectacles. If only they'd stopped talking. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WHISTLING IN THE DARK—Red Skelton, Conrad Veidt, Ann Rutherford. Based on the play by Laurence Gross and Edward Childs Carpenter. Directed by A. Sylvan Simon. The leader of a cult racket, in danger of losing a fortune left to him by one of his rich dupes, kidnaps the writer of radio murder mysteries and tries to force him to remove this danger by concocting a "perfect" crime. A farcical melodrama along familiar lines, enlivened by Red Skelton, who has comic gifts much like Bob Hope's. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WORLD PREMIERE — John Barrymore, Frances Farmer, Sig Rumann. Original screen story by Earl Felton and Gordon Kahn. Directed by Ted Tetzlaff. Rough-house satirical farce about the efforts of Axis emissaries to sabotage an anti-Nazi film being made in Hollywood, and to prevent the film's world premiere in Washington. Played in broad burlesque style, with Barrymore as a temperamental director. Lots of laughs and fast action, with occasional slow-ups when a bit of complication involving the personal jealousies of some of the characters is allowed to intrude on the main plot. Paramount.
- f YANK IN THE R.A.F., A—Tyrone Power, Betty Grable, John Sutton, Reginald Gardiner. Original screen story by Melville Crossman. Directed by Henry King. It's difficult to understand why American lads who join up with the British are always so brash and painfully competent both in war and love. This conception of the American in the staid refinement of England seems to fascinate movie producers, though most of us would probably find it very difficult to recall the type in our own experience. But accepting the creation as set forth by Mr. Power we have a fast, exciting and handsomely photographed film replete with massed flights, tactical formations and a thrilling reconstruction of the debacle at Dunkirk. Little attempt is made to detail the training of RAF flyers, most of the footage is devoted to reconnaissance and bombing flights and a peppy love triangle wherein British charm and Yankee vim vie in the courting of the delectable Miss Grable, an American night-club singer cheering up the lads in besieged London. Tyrone's gay rakehood finally wins out. Mr. Gardiner plays the role of a flying gentleman with wit and

consummate smoothness; Mr. Sutton as the squadron commander has great poise and charm; and Mr. Power chews gum, sweeps the ladies off their feet and makes war dashingly. The film is quite a decent blend of the activities of the RAF (such parts were made in Britain) and an adventure-romance the dialogue of which is much better than the plot. 20th-Century-Fox.

SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

- f ALUMINUM — How aluminum is made, from the importation of bauxite through the chemical and engineering processes of changing the ore to alumina and finally into sheets of aluminum. The increase in facilities for making this metal is shown, and its importance in national defense. Recommended for schools and libraries. U. S. Office of Emergency Management.
- f *ARISTOCRATS OF THE KENNEL—Handsome shots of handsome dogs of all kinds at a huge show. The film is very nicely put together and not only gives fine studies of the best animals in each breed but devotes some amusing shots to the primping department where the proud beauties are clipped and combed and generally smartened up for the competition. 20th Century-Fox.
- f BEAUTY AND THE BEACH—Some of the things to see and things to hear at Jones Beach—it will attract those who like these things and warn those who want to avoid them. Paramount.
- f BOMBER—Called a "defense report on film" this picture shows graphically how our army's crack multimotored bombing planes—the one called B-26—are made. Carl Sandburg wrote the commentary which accompanies the picture. Recommended for schools and libraries. U. S. Motion Picture Committee Cooperating for National Defense.
- f CITY WITHIN A CITY, THE—A visit through Radio City in New York with narration by Hugh James. It offers several interesting views but for this sort of thing is about an average film. Columbia.
- fj EXPLORING SPACE (Columbia Cinescope) — A visit to the Hayden Planetarium where inner and outer space and its sights are explored, with a narrative by Gregory Abbott. Columbia.
- f GEORGE WASHINGTON, COUNTRY GENTLEMAN (Variety Views) — A pleasant and instructive tour of Mount Vernon. Universal.
- f GHOST TREASURE—Three legends of gold in Death Valley, and three men who went searching for it. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj GLACIER TRAILS — Views and information about the Rockies in Montana. 20th-Century-Fox.
- f GLIMPSES OF FLORIDA (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk) — This will console those who haven't been able to get to Florida and see its attractions, especially those at Silver Springs. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f *GUARDIANS OF THE WILDS (Paramount Paraphrase)—An unusually complete and informative short of the varied duties of Forest Rangers in all seasons and in all districts of the country. Paramount.
- f HERE COMES THE CAVALRY (Technicolor Special) — A romanticized presentation of the training and technique of the U. S. Cavalry, with fine displays of men and horses in mock action. In many places a quite beautiful film. Vitaphone.
- f HUNTING THE HARD WAY (Broadway Brevities)—Tracking down mountain lions and bears with lasso and bow and arrow, with the spot given to the superb archery of Howard Hill. Vitaphone.
- f INSIDE PASSAGE (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—These scenes of the famous Alaskan Inside Passage are memorable for their realistic coloring. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 13—Anna Neagle seems to embarrass the regulars what with her charm and her brilliance. RKO Radio.
- f INFORMATION PLEASE No. 1 — The usual group of experts with John Gunther as their guest, parade their wit and erudition. RKO Radio.
- f IT HAPPENS ON ROLLERS (Sports Parade) —The art of fancy roller-skating featuring several artists in the game, with humorous comment. Vitaphone.
- f JOURNEY IN TUNISIA (Columbia Tours) — An interesting little trip through the chief towns and sightlier spots in the French north African colony, with the focus on the picturesque. Columbia.
- f JUNGLE FISHING (World of Sports)—A trip by boat up a Cuban river to do some mackerel fishing, with Bill Stern providing the narration. Columbia.
- f LIONS FOR SALE (Sports Parade)—An attractive short showing the methods used to train lions from the time they are cubs. There are many fine shots of the beasts in various stages of development. Vitaphone.
- f MARCH OF TIME, THE No. 1 (8th Series)—"Thumbs Up! Texas" — This is little more than a lively travelogue with boastful narration by a native and a number of interesting points which indicate the unique make-up of Texans. The many fields of defense work covered in parts of Texas make the chief point of this issue. RKO Radio.
- f MARCH OF TIME, THE No. 2 (8th Series)—"Norway in Revolt"—An uneven film in quality but having many stirring moments in its delineation of the heroic struggles of the Norse to regain their land and freedom from the invader. There are several sequences that are posed, such as the sabotage methods used to destroy useful objects and send news to the enslaved people. The shots of the youths escaping to England and picked up on the seas by a British submarine are thrilling. RKO Radio.
- f MEET THE CHAMPS (Grantland Rice Sportlight) — The Wilhelm Brothers convince you beyond a doubt that they are archery champs of great skill. Paramount.
- f NORTHERN NEIGHBORS (Variety Views) — A brief survey of Canadian highlights, from Niagara to the quintuplets. Universal.
- f *OF PUZZLES AND PUPS (John Nesbitt's Passing Parade)—This shows very entertainingly how dogs are used by the Ph.D.s in determining attention reactions, the results of the experiment aiding personnel directors to pick the right man for the right job. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f PAMPAS PADDOCK (Sportscope)—The breeding, training and racing of blooded horses in the Argentine and Chile. There are some handsome studies of the animals. RKO Radio.
- f PICTURE PEOPLE No. 1—Stars in Defense—Helen Broderick introduces various Hollywood people who are active helping the government in the new defense program. RKO Radio.
- f QUIZ KIDS, THE No. 1—The five juvenile savants exhibit their erudition with an almost perfect score. Paramount.
- f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 2 — Hobart Bosworth provides the narration for a series of off-screen shots of some of the well-remembered old stars who have died. Columbia.
- f SHOOTING MERMAIDS (Grantland Rice Sportlight)—There are mermen in it too and the "shooting" refers to camera work. The lads and lassies do some handsome underwater swimming and other submarine didoes with underwater photographing apparatus taking it all in. Paramount.
- f SHOW DOGS (World of Sports)—Blooded dogs of all descriptions are featured in their everyday life and at shows. Some of the shots are very attractive. Columbia.

- f SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC No. 1—Peggy Wood, Faith Baldwin, H. V. Kaltenborn and Johnny Green form the board of experts for this musical quiz program. Columbia.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 96 — The Shampoo Springs, where the water has natural soap minerals in it, are the main feature in this collection of strange items. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 97 — Especially interesting is the Chinese Junk which a family of five lives in around New York all year, and apparently they are very comfortable, too. Universal.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION No. 98—Suggestions for hobbies are found in this, like carving peach stones or lion taming in your own backyard, if you are in search of a hobby. Universal.
- f SUCKER LIST — The methods of racketeers who supply phoney race-track tips for credulous people anxious to make quick money and something for nothing are exposed in this interesting item of the Crime Does Not Pay Series. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f TRAIL OF THE BUCCANEERS, THE — (Variety Views)—You start out in St. Petersburg, Florida and follow the yacht race to Havana through waters once infested by pirates. Universal.
- f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS No. 1—This contains a very instructive sequence on the making and use of balloons and a very amusing set of Dr. Seuss' amazing distortions of animals. Paramount.
- f WATER BUGS (Pete Smith Specialty) — An amusing survey of the strange contraptions that water sports lovers invent and how they work. There's a water ski expert whose antics are really breathtaking. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WHAT'S LACROSSE (Grantland Rice Spotlight)—Watching Indians in the Great Smoky country play a primitive version of Lacrosse that their ancestors invented and contrasting it with the smooth variety played by the college and prep boys makes this film pleasant watching for the sports minded. Paramount.
- f WORLD OF SOUND, THE (Cinescope)—This offers an informative explanation of how we hear, and how devices have been invented to enable us to hear despite different ailments of the ear. Columbia.
- fj FARM FROLICS (Merrie Melody Cartoon) — A humorous survey of a typical farm with emphasis on its animal inhabitants. Vitaphone.
- f GENERAL NUISANCE — This introduces Buster Keaton again, doing the same dead-pan antics that delighted audiences before. As a millionaire draftee, alarming things happen to him but he fights bravely for our enjoyment. Columbia.
- f HAPPY FACES (Broadway Brevities) — A silent comedy of 20 years ago featuring Ben Turpin and such old favorites with satiric comments dubbed in. Rather good fun. Vitaphone.
- fj HIAWATHA'S RABBIT HUNT (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A giddy version of Hiawatha's hunt for a rabbit and how he did not succeed. Vitaphone.
- fj HOLLYWOOD STEPS OUT (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—The opening night in a new Hollywood night spot with cartoons of famous stars pointing up their physical and temperamental idiosyncrasies. Vitaphone.
- fj ICE CARNIVAL, THE (Terrytoon Cartoon) — The race between the tortoise and the hare done on ice to a delightful musical accompaniment. 20th-Century-Fox.
- fj I'LL NEVER CROW AGAIN (Popeye Cartoon) — Olive sends for Popeye to chase some delightful crows out of her kitchen garden which he does after suffering several humiliations. Paramount.
- fj INKI AND THE LION (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—Inki, a cannibal's son, goes through a sad and macabre sort of polka with a lion and a macaw with delightful musical accompaniment. Vitaphone.
- fj LEND A PAW (Walt Disney Mickey Mouse Cartoon) — Pluto's double-faced conscience is impersonated by a plutonic angel and devil, whose argument takes up most of the reelage in this cartoon. RKO Radio.
- fj *LITTLE CESARIO (M.G.M. Cartoon) — The title character is the lowliest of a clan of life-saving St. Bernard dogs who live high in the Alps. However, by a fluke, Cesario manages to rescue giant Brother Alexander, his hero dog, and all ends happily. It's pure and beautiful fantasy of a quiet kind. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj MAN'S BEST FRIEND (Walter Lantz Cartoon)—Pleading the case of the hunter's dog who has to track all day and then spend a sleepless night in a cold, crude hunting lodge. Universal.
- fj ONE MAN NAVY (Terrytoon Cartoon) — Rejected by the army, Gandy does some amusing and highly effective actions on the high seas in behalf of his country. In Technicolor. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj PORKY'S PRIZE PONY (Looney Tune Cartoon)—Or, don't judge a horse by its appearance, for the winner of Porky's race was anything but comely at the start. But he won. Vitaphone.
- fj SUPERMAN (Cartoon)—The marvelous methods that characterize Superman's approach to dealing with villains are displayed with vigor and crackling color. The film follows the line of the comic strip stories and all the characters are represented by normal voices. Paramount.
- fj UNCLE JOEY COMES TO TOWN (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—Uncle not only looks like Joe E. Brown, but plays a great game of baseball with all his relations in this cartoon. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj WACKY WORM, THE—The worm, here chased by a hungry crow, bears a suspicious resemblance to Jerry Colonna, but that is flattering to both, since both are good comics. Vitaphone.
- fj WE, THE ANIMALS SQUEAK (Looney Tune Cartoon)—Kansas City Kitty, intrepid mouse-catcher, relates her greatest fight for the audience in which some Kansas mice really are meanies. Vitaphone.
- fj WELCOME LITTLE STRANGER (Terry-Toon Cartoon)—Another treatment of the Ugly Duckling theme with suicide threatened before the parental chickens will warm up to the little black duck. 20th Century-Fox.

MUSICALS

- m *CARNIVAL OF RHYTHM—Great care in direction and the unusual talents of Katherine Dunham and her group give great artistry to this short. Around a simple plot are woven authentic dances and songs of South America, and all presented in stunning color. Vitaphone.
- f IN THE GROOVE — Freddie Slack and his Eight Beats put on a very nice song and dance show in a railroad station. This is an unusually good example of this series of short musicals and will be especially pleasing to Boogie-Woogie fans. Universal.
- f THOSE GOOD OLD DAYS (Melody Masters)—An old vaudeville star reminisces on his past triumphs on the stage. Tuneful and nostalgic. Vitaphone.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj ART OF SELF DEFENSE, THE (Walt Disney Goofy Cartoon) — An amusing study of the advance of pugilism with Goofy as demonstrator. RKO Radio.
- fj CHEF DONALD (Walt Disney Donald Duck Cartoon)—This is a splendid film. Donald tries to make waffles. You may imagine the rest. RKO Radio.
- fj COY DECOY (Looney Tune Cartoon) — The ugly duckling escapes the wicked wolf and takes to wife the decoy duck that almost was his undoing. Vitaphone.
- fj DONALD'S CAMERA (Walt Disney Donald Duck Cartoon)—A delightful episode in Donald's life wherein he attempts to capture wild life with a camera instead of a gun. The red-headed woodpecker is wonderful. RKO Radio.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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November, 1941



The Welsh Mining Village of "How Green Was My Valley" (see page 10)

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

m* APPOINTMENT FOR LOVE — Charles Boyer, Margaret Sullavan. Original screen story by Ladislaus Bus-Fekete. Directed by William A. Seiter. Here is a smartly-turned comedy in which good, honest love presents a real problem to two otherwise worldly, all-knowing moderns. She is a top-flight woman doctor which naturally allows her to be intimate with patients, some of whom are men. He is a playwright, a business naturally requiring his being familiar with lovely leading ladies. Obviously, as man and wife, two such people have to suffer much before reaching a happy compromise with the other's business appointments. Jealousy builds into separation until a comic turn re-unites the pair. Boyer and Miss Sullavan do well in giving credibility to rather synthetic roles while clever lines and handsome furnishings redeem the slightly worn theme. Universal.

fj* DUMBO — Feature cartoon in Technicolor made by Walt Disney from the story by Helen Aberson and Harold Pearl. Supervising director Ben Sharpstein. What can one say of it? *Dumbo* is an experience not easily reducible to words: it seems like the best thing Disney has done. Certainly from a technical point of view, the drawing, the photography, the color, the music, the animation, the film has never been surpassed by Disney's best work that is unique in the field of cinema. As a creation, using all the almost magical devices perfected in the producer's studio to project it for popular entertainment, it attains a novelty and delightfulness that make mere description or criticism embarrassing. You have the circus sequences and feel that there is the circus quintessentially revealed. The pink elephant *Walpurgisnacht* is the soul of witty, mad intoxication. The crows who finally teach Dumbo to fly are the quick spirit of negro joyousness

and humor. And these are but parts that come quickly to mind in the rhythmic, mounting stream of color and invention that makes the movie. Against all these effects are ranged the ineffably charming characters of birds and beasts, the elephants, the little mouse who is Dumbo's mentor and prime friend, the clowns, the other circus animals and finally the gentle mother of the little Dumbo. It's funny, it's touching, it's witty, it's tuneful, it's exciting. And being all this and much more, it maintains an emotional balance that is little short of incredible and is wholly satisfying. RKO-Radio.

f* 40,000 HORSEMEN — Grant Taylor, Betty Bryant. Original screen story by Charles Chauvel. Directed by Charles Chauvel. This is the thrilling story of the campaign waged by the Anzac cavalry that resulted in the complete rout of the Imperial German and Turkish forces in the Holy Land and saved the Suez Canal in World War I. The campaign sequences are wonderful, especially so is the grand charge of the horsemen on Beersheba which broke the hold of the Central Powers in the Near East. The story leaves something to be desired in its hairbreadth escapes and a patness every now and then that suggests our own melodramatic Westerns. But that aside, the film is a splendid example of photo technique, sincere and moving acting, and exhilarating panoramas of fighting men and horses. For his work the hero particularly sheds glory on himself. Of course the picture has a strong anti-German bias that in the characterization of the enemy gets out of hand occasionally. The general effect, however, is that of a mighty saga of warriors who by gallantry, sacrifice and unquenchable spirits swept clean of the foe the terrain given into their care. S. S. Krellberg. (British production.)

f* HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY—(See Exceptional Photoplays Dep't, page 10.)

m* MARRIED BACHELOR — Robert Young, Ruth Hussey. Original screen story by Manuel Seff. Directed by Edward Buzzell. The situation arrived at in the title is part of Mr. Young's efforts to patch up a rather shaky marriage. Being inherently lazy, he is short on cash until he goes into the publishing business. By accident, his first book and one which he is credited with writing is "A Bachelor Looks at Marriage," in which he urges every married lady to think of herself as more of a queen bee. The results on his personal life are obvious. His appearance in the public eye enforces his bachelorhood while his instinctive self craves his wife. The latter finally fixes him properly by revealing his true identity and motivation to the public over a broadcast. The script is very lively with gags a-plenty and some thugs whose conversation is captivating. With smooth performances, it shapes up very well as a comedy though cutting might have helped. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

(Continued on page 18)

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Movies in a Democracy

A NATION, it has been said and repeated, gets the kind of government it deserves, and someone adapted that saying into another, that people get the kind of movies they deserve. If that is true anywhere it must be particularly true in a democracy. We think of ourselves as *the* democracy, more than ever these days when everything going on in the world sharpens our consciousness of what our "way of life" really is, compared with other—and antagonistic—ways of life. Here especially, and especially in the case of our movies, which—depend so vitally on whether we like them or not, we ought to be getting what we want, and if not precisely what we want, certainly what we tolerate. And that, after all, is what we deserve.

Tolerance has a negative sound to it, but also a good-natured sound. It is one of our national characteristics, and maybe one of our national virtues. It certainly isn't an aggressive thing. Movie goers, the mass of them who look mainly for recreation from the screen, don't go campaigning for things they aren't getting: they just go to the theatres, or stay away, as their instinct for entertainment moves them, and leave the campaigning for the vocal minorities who go in actively for what they think are improvements. Improvements in their fellow men, for the most part. In the years since the improvers began to give movies their attention the only ways in which they have accomplished anything have been when they really represented something general and funda-

mental in the ordinary man and woman. Movie makers, however high or low their aims, can't shove anything upon audiences that audiences do not want, and bodies of this or that who would like to dictate to the movie-makers are up against the same thing. The veto of empty seats in a theatre is unanswerable.

However much radio talks and meetings and editorials might make it seem otherwise, there are a lot of things most of us don't do a lot of talking about—the daily ways and thoughts and feelings of an unbossed people. They are just part of our life, like eating and working and sleeping. Just how much this life of ours is reflected in our movies would be interesting for someone to search out. But the impression is inescapable, looking back over the years, that movies and their audiences do interact upon each other, and they progress, if they progress at all, together. A patriotic speech about democracy in a film means only so much as the echo it finds in its audience, and an audience often finds it embarrassing to hear its maybe subconscious ideals orated about, like listening to a man shouting how much he loves his mother.

Propagandizing democracy isn't what creates democracy. Democracy creates and re-creates itself, as we live it. If our movies reflect our lives, as we live them or as we romanticize about them, is there anything else we can reasonably demand of them? If they don't, is that anything but what we deserve?

What the Movies Do for Books and Vice Versa

A Discourse on the Power of Film Adaptations to Increase Book Sales, and
Hollywood's Dependence on Books for Its Screen Stories

By JOHN B. TURNER

THE fact that we have just passed through Book Week (November 2nd to 8th) a period set aside annually by publishers and booksellers to stimulate interest in their wares through special store displays, author luncheons, radio programs and book-fairs, should give the movie-minded pause to consider the status of books in their relationship to the screen. It is a question one aspect of which can be readily answered in the simplest terms: from the earliest days of movie-making onward, books have provided much of the best subject matter for films; and the movie-going public continues to purchase vast numbers of books as a result of seeing adaptations on the screen.

There are certain definite evidences which can be called upon in substantial testimony as to Hollywood's reliance on popular classics and current best-sellers. Statistics in themselves cannot always make a clear case, but what value film production has in leading the public to read and buy books that might never otherwise have aroused their interest constitutes a question to be answered with abundant evidence in the book-trade, based upon the primary fact that for long periods following release of a picture thousands and thousands of copies of the book upon which it is based are sold in the usual reprint editions.

In some cases the figures have reached staggering proportions, as typified in the much publicized instance of *Gone With the Wind*. After a sale totalling a million copies of this novel in the regular edition, more than 1,072,000 copies of popular-priced motion-picture editions were printed by the publishers. The first printing of 350,000 copies of the film-edition was exhausted within ten days after it was put on sale,

directly after the first showing of the picture in the two cities of Atlanta and New York. This is easily the most historic example of the power the screen has to bring additional audiences to a book.

An important feature for the book-buyer is that in almost every instance of movie tie-up with a book, and this includes *Gone With the Wind*, the film edition sells for considerably less than the original edition. Fiction is usually published originally at prices ranging from \$2 to \$3, and in the great majority of cases at \$2.50. The film reprint editions commonly range in downward gradations from \$1.69 through \$1.39, \$1, 75c, 69c, 50c, 39c, down to 25 c. Often in the instance of titles in very wide demand there will be editions at two or more reprint prices, each of which may be sponsored by a different reprint house. This is especially the case with such popular merchandise as the Walt Disney picture-books, where as many as three or four price ranges may prevail, beginning with the regularly priced trade editions and descending in scale to those costing a dime, to be found on the five-and-ten cent counters.

Another prominent, and perhaps the most interesting, publishing project aspiring to reach new reading audiences is the firm of Pocket Books Inc., which issues pocket size volumes bound in semi-stiff jackets and printed in clear type on good paper at the surprisingly low price of 25c. Like a large proportion of the other inexpensive reprints these books reach a far larger market than distribution through regular book store channels alone could achieve for they, as well as the 39c Triangle Books, are sold in drug stores, magazine stands, the so-called five-and-ten cent chains etc. It has been pointed out by the publisher of Pocket Books that

in one typical American city—Detroit, population $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions—there are only about a dozen outlets for a \$2.50 book while as many as 1100 outlets for his line of 25c books are to be found.

Just how widely film production of a classic can stimulate the sale of these 25c books is demonstrated by the number of copies of *Wuthering Heights* sold in the course of the two and a half years following the motion picture release—340,000—in the Pocket Book edition alone. *Pride and Prejudice* issued in this same inexpensive format a year later has sold about 163,000 copies to date. Both publications were timed to take full advantage of the movie public's interest in the original classic. The Pocket Book edition has to date sold some 285,000 copies of *Lost Horizon*, a unique follow-up of the film success. Felix Salten's delicately charming novel *Bambi* has already had a pre-sale in this edition of 119,000 copies, though the film is not scheduled for release till January 1942. The fact that Disney has selected the story to serve as a film vehicle has undoubtedly inspired many new purchasers who hitherto would have found the book for sale only at a considerably higher price.

Sometimes you find a book which in its original edition has only sold a bare two or three thousand copies—scarcely enough to allow the publisher to break even—will be purchased for film production, and one of the reprint houses will usually be on its toes to have the cheap edition ready in time for release simultaneously with the film. Triangle Books points out the recent instance of *Hold Back the Dawn*, a recent novel by Ketti Frings, which in its original edition had a sale of under 3,000 copies, but in its 39c edition in one month alone sold 30,000 copies. A rare experiment is being tried out by this publisher in bringing out *Reap the Wild Wind* by Thelma Strabel in an original edition at 39c, though the author had received offers from other reputable publishers to issue her book at the regular trade-price of a new novel (usually \$2.50); but the fact that the film from her story is now nearing completion and will soon be ready for release led both the reprint publisher and the author to consider this a more

profitable means of distributing the book to a wide audience; where the trade edition published first through the usual limited channels might not have compensated for the larger royalty per copy sold in a trade edition. At all events it is an experiment of considerable importance to those novelists whose work has been sold to Hollywood prior to its book publication. Moreover, the film editions of these two novels by Miss Frings and Miss Strabel point a good example of book sales to be reckoned upon from low-priced volumes with strong story interest even though the author's names may not yet be familiar.

I have alluded above to the vast sales of the motion picture reprint of *Gone With the Wind* and also to the continuous demand in the public libraries for those books which have been adapted into films. Motion picture companies have been led to an increasing awareness of the potentialities of public library audiences as proving grounds for reader interest when the filming of some better or lesser known classic is being considered in Hollywood. From time to time the film producers have asked the public library staffs to cooperate in undertaking a survey of the demands for any classic or standard works in which the film people may suspect latent possibilities. The New York Public Library system was called upon to give a report on reader-demands for *Wuthering Heights* before the picture was undertaken and has more recently been asked to appraise reader-interest in *Jane Eyre* and Wilkie Collins' eerie novel, *The Moonstone*. These two latter-named may well offer popular screen fare should any producer consider them potential heirs to the appeal of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* respectively. Like all standard works of classic fiction both stories would have the added economic advantage of being in the public domain as regards copyright.

One far-reaching library survey in particular, begun by the New York Public Library in November 1939 through its branch circulation departments, has extraordinary significance in indicating the extent to which the increase of demand for a book follows the showing of the motion picture version. The book chosen was the already

much-discussed *Gone With the Wind*, termed by the Library "the world's record best-seller." The report makes it clear that its primary purpose is "securing facts, not estimates, to support our *general knowledge that film versions of books are a direct stimulus to reading, particularly if they are well adapted.*" (Italics are mine.)

"Before the motion picture was released (December 1939) there were 480 copies of *Gone With the Wind* in the branch libraries. . . . When we completed the survey (August 1940) we discovered that there were 640 copies in the system. Thus 160 extra copies were purchased in response to the demand created by the film." The report goes on to state that the total figure for reservations a month before the opening of the film was 162, while during the period of eight months indicated above, the total reservations increased to 2,501.

The man who adapted *Gone With the Wind* for filming, the late Sidney Howard, one of America's foremost playwrights, was also noted as a leading adaptor for the screen. Serving for some years as head of the Dramatists Guild and one of the most successful of Hollywood's craftsmen, he had ample opportunity to observe the increased dependence of the motion picture industry upon books and published material for its outstanding film productions. Not long before his untimely death in 1939, Sidney Howard contributed one section to a symposium entitled "We Make the Movies" (W. W. Norton & Co., 1937) writing on the subject "The Story Gets a Treatment," and he made this opening observation: "The screen as we know it draws the vast bulk of its story material from books, periodicals and the stage—with a few imaginative excursions into biography." From this statement it becomes clear that film production as he viewed it depends greatly upon books and other published material for its source material.

Now that we have already considered something of the vast part the movies play in increasing the interest in books and in expanding their circulation, we may turn to ask ourselves: Just what is the extent of the present-day debt of Hollywood to previously published material? Basing the answer on

figures computed from the tabulations of *Film Facts*, the annual issued by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America—popularly termed the Hays Office—the average yearly total of story-sources for feature-length pictures derived from published material is approximately 35%. This material comprises novels, biographies, plays and short stories in published form, as against the average annual 6% for original, unpublished screen stories. The averages are reckoned from figures analyzing the story-sources for the years beginning with 1936 and running through 1940, the only inclusive figures on the subject available for any one period.

While that percentage, comparatively small though it may seem, is drawn from *all* feature-length films released from 1936 to 1940 inclusive that were approved by the Production Code Administration—and computed from a total average of approximately 560 pictures produced each year—it can be said without hesitancy that among outstanding film productions each year the percentage of those stemming from previously published material is far higher, most likely between 50 and 70%. To attain this estimate it is only necessary to canvas the lists of annual selections made by the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays of the National Board of Review as well as the choices of the Review Committees of the National Board, which are annually polled for their "ten best" selections. An analysis of these listings from 1936 through 1940 shows that between 50 and 60% of the films chosen were based upon published material. Likewise, the *Film Daily's* annual poll of more than 550 critics throughout the nation, representing some 485 newspapers and syndicates, reveals a similar percentage of choices, and in as representative a group of the public. The pictures included in these widely divergent lists can certainly be considered to represent a fair sampling or sounding-out of Hollywood's trend to draw upon novels, short stories, biographies and plays for the better and more memorable motion pictures of the year. If a census could be taken of those pictures which are annually revived with most success, it is not unlikely that the percentage of adaptations from books would run

even higher than the findings quoted above. At least one-half of the number of pictures to which the public returns, as well as those which make the strongest popular impression during their current runs, can be considered as owing their basic story to some form of published literature.

A discourse such as this one on the influence of movies on books and vice versa, can only terminate with the comment that the subject might be approached from any number of points of view, including that of the reader who is looking to the screen to reproduce what he has enjoyed on the printed page. What, considering the demands of the screen, is he justified in expecting, and what is he justified in resenting in a film adaptation? But that, to say the least, is a subject which in itself would demand lengthy discussion, and the most that can be said here is that I am sure that such films as *Rebecca* and *Mr. Chips*, both bringing famous recent novels to the screen, were so immensely popular because they did not violate the reader's expectations too cruelly.

Book Review

A Lady Goes to Hollywood, by Helen Partridge.
The Macmillan Company, New York, New York.
259 pages, \$2.00.

HERE, in an easy-to-read collection of letters, is a woman's view of Hollywood — or more properly, a lady's view. Mrs. Partridge found that it made quite a bit of difference that her husband was at work on an "A" picture. This is the mark of distinction — the author is a lady. Bellamy Partridge is, of course, the author of the best-seller, *Country Lawyer*, and was called west to collaborate on the movie script for it, his wife coming along to do a little work herself and also to report to her friends back East, and now to the reading public, on everything from beauty-aids in filmdom to auctioning off of the collapsed Trocadero's lavish furnishings. Being "A"-picture people, the Partridges had to take up expensive residence, withstand close

scrutiny of their clothes and her hair-dos, be feted at lavish dinners and be able to chatter about top-heavy salaries without a quaver. These were musts in her life. On her own hook, Mrs. Partridge covered many other facets of the movie capital. She reports on the type and condition of gardens, that being a major interest of hers. She has much to say of dieting in Hollywood—an important business—of the private school her daughter attended where parents are more catered to than the children, of the library, of the social habits during filming and after filming, of the 70c egg she might have ordered for breakfast at her hotel, of the methods used in the beauty parlors which contrast with the New York ways, of Palm Springs and San Fernando valley, of the studio lot and Hollywood Boulevard and the San Juan Capistrano Mission.

Of especial interest to students of the film are her descriptions of the progress of her husband's script from stage to stage as new problems arose for him to cope with, although fictitious names are used in most cases, including the names of her husband and his script. There is a grand re-creation of a story conference and some commentary on the working habits. "Hollywood is neither wicked nor silly. I have never seen a community of fiercer-working, harder-trying, more healthy-concerned people." Another good observation has to do with would-be glamour girls. "Girls were much nearer a role in pictures if they stayed at home in the choir or took part maybe in amateur theatricals. Once in Hollywood, you are as good as lost."

Mrs. Partridge has a quick, easy style with a sure reportorial sense. More for personal reasons, the reader assumes, she has included correspondence on the state of her Connecticut farm which was pining for her attention, and her six-year-old daughter who was not taken west originally. But this helps to bring out the author's good nature and her down-to-earth New England background. She didn't lose her head while writing and living in Hollywood, (save perhaps over clothes — one wonders what I. Mangin's interest in the book might be) so her book fills a nice gap in documents of personal reactions to the home of the movies.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

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RICHARD GRIFFITH
HENRY HART
HATTIE S. HEYMANN

JOHN A. MCANDREW
MARY B. MILLER
FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON
J. K. PAULDING

RUSSELL POTTER
JOHN B. TURNER
FRANK WARD

The Forgotten Village

Story by John Steinbeck, photographed by Alexander Hackensmid, music by Professor Hanns Eisler, narration by Burgess Meredith, produced and directed by Herbert Kline, acted by the people of the pueblo of Santiago.

THE latest of the tedious inroads made on the freedom of the screen by the censors appears in the pronouncement of the New York State Censorship Board that the presence of a Mexican peasant woman nursing her baby and the presentation of the plight of the same woman subjected to primitive midwifery make the beautiful documentary film *The Forgotten Village* unfit for public exhibition unless the scenes are deleted. The producers of the movie are unwilling to comply on the grounds that the condemned scenes are neither "indecent" nor "inhuman" (the terms are those of the Censorship Board) and that such cuts would seriously mar an integral work of film art. People who have seen the movie might well wonder on what moral grounds the conclusions of the Board of Censors are based. How the inclusion of the scenes could possibly harm what the scholastic philosophers have so conveniently termed "the reasonable man" is really quite beyond anything but an extremely puritan or an extremely prurient imagination. And as in the traditional application of law, so in the traditional application of ethics the conscientious artist, as well as the conscientious jurist, is hardly bound by the notions of right and wrong maintained by moral or psychological invalids. But there it is for our

wonder and despair, and a splendid picture for the time being is denied the poor, shepherded public. The old, perennial problem of movie censorship by official groups—unofficial censorship groups are entitled to the same liberties that are consistent with the laws governing free speech — presumably never will be solved until communities make dollar-a-year jobs for the censors or until the courts finally establish that the movies as organs of expression have the same rights as the press. It is in the pursuit of the latter happy conclusion that the producers of *The Forgotten Village* are willing to make an issue of the demanded deletions in the courts of law. And as an example of the kind of film threatened by official censorship the producers are very lucky in the present instance.

The story of *The Forgotten Village* is a simple one. It is a picture of backward Mexican peasants living in the remote pueblo of Santiago, made actually among the natives with no professional actors; and it is the kind of earnest and powerful picture that might have been expected from the writer of *Grapes of Wrath* and the filmer of *Crisis* and *Lights Out in Europe*, warm with sympathy, sturdy in its respect for the human spirit and energetic in pointing out how certain tragic social wrongs could be righted. It centers about a boy, Juan Diego, and his family in a time of pestilence and how the boy and the teacher in his school try to bring modern medical skill to a little town that had always turned to the local "wise woman" with her herbs and snakeskin and charms when sickness came. The death of his little brother, Paco, and the sickening of his little sister in spite of the religio-magic of Trini,



Little Paco's Funeral in "The Forgotten Village"

the "wise woman," send Juan Diego to the distant capital for a doctor. He walks the whole way and returns with a medical truck but the "wise woman" rouses up the village against the medical mission and the people hide their sick youngsters and finally drive the doctor and his staff from the town. Juan Diego, however, spirits his sister away in the night to be inoculated by the doctor who has camped not far from the village and thus saves her life. For this his father disowns him as the betrayer of his people and he goes back to the city with the doctor, determined to study medicine and engage in the fight to free his countrymen from the superstition and ignorance that bring on them such needless suffering and death. The film ends on the hopeful note: "The change will come, is coming, as surely as there are thousands of Juan Diegos in the villages of Mexico." A picture of great pictorial beauty, it is both a document and a moving drama, fashioned with extraordinary good taste and an artistry that brings to mind the best of

the Russian folk films as well as the documentaries of Robert Flaherty.

Now to examine the scenes dubbed by the censors "indecent" and "inhuman." We find they are not isolated, unrelated episodes included in the film for startling effect. They grow out of the story itself. The first occurs at the end of a sequence in which the mother passes out the evening meal to all her family, finally giving her breast to the baby in her arms. The nursing scene lasts ten seconds. (It might be interesting to know that according to the rules that usually govern the Board of Censors in its decisions the bare breast of a woman is objectionable on the screen only if it is white! In this case the woman's skin is dark.) No more emphasis is placed on feeding the infant than there is upon handing round the food to the husband and the other children. It is simply the evening meal in the house of a Mexican peasant.

The second "indecent" or "inhuman" sequence takes place where a premature birth is brought on by the mother's grief over the

death of her little boy and the "wise woman" uses her primitive methods to help the infant into the world. Here there are no exposures of person at all. There is no attempt to be clinical. The mother in her agony of soul and body is the poignant symbol of life and death where superstition and ignorance sit in the seat of power. This scene is the great climax of the film. Its ultimate effect is to send Juan Diego to the city to bring medical aid to the stricken village. To call the scene "indecent" is to pervert the meaning of a good English word as ordinary educated people understand it. To call it "inhuman" betrays a sensibility that should make intolerable every scene of suffering and death to be found in countless films heretofore found unobjectionable.

As to the scene's artistic necessity in the film, Garson Kanin, the director, sums it up succinctly thus: "From a technical point of view, it is my opinion that its (the birth scene) deletion would be catastrophic. The removal of this climax would so seriously injure the form of the whole film, so surely lessen its impact, and so dangerously interfere with its theme, that I strongly urge you not to exhibit the picture at all if it is cut. . . . This kind of censorship will drive John Steinbeck away from the medium as it has already many fine creative artists."

However it comes out, this latest tussle for the freedom of the screen—and it is to be hoped that a film so beautiful and high-minded will survive the supersensitive scruples of the official watchdogs of our morals—*The Forgotten Village* must remain in the memories of those privileged to have seen it as a splendid example of documentary cinema, exalting the human spirit in its heroic search for light and freedom in a world so confounded by enslavements and ignorance.

A.B.

Rated Exceptional

How Green Was My Valley

Screenplay by Philip Dunne from Richard Llewellyn's novel, directed by John Ford, photographed by Arthur Miller, music by Alfred New-

man. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck for 20th Century-Fox, distributed by 20th Century-Fox.

The cast

Mr. Morgan	Donald Crisp
Mrs. Morgan	Sara Allgood
Huw	Roddy McDowell
Ianto	John Loder
Ivor	Patric Knowles
Angharad	Maureen O'Hara
Mr. Gruffydd	Walter Pidgeon
Bronwen	Anna Lee
Cyfartha	Barry Fitzgerald
Dai Bando	Rhys Williams
Mr. Parry	Morton Lowry
Ceinwen	Ann Todd
Davy	Richard Fraser
Gwilym	Evan S. Evans
Owen	James Monks
Meilyn Lewis	Eve March
Mrs. Nicholas	Ethel Griffies
Ensemble Singer	Tudor Williams

The Welsh Singers

HOW *Green Was My Valley* is technically one of the finest flowerings of the sound motion picture.

In the rather rambling memories of a man recalling his boyhood in a little Welsh mining town, memories as unplotted as might emerge in anyone's fond recollection, John Ford has found something to put his best craftsmanship and feeling into, and no one has better craftsmanship in movies, nor sounder and tenderer feeling, than John Ford at his best.

Huw Morgan, looking back on his childhood, remembers his father mostly, the center of the family back in that green valley when the growth of the coal mines was beginning to blacken the greenness and the owners were thinking more and more of money and the proud miners began to realize that their independence was sinking into wage-slavery. The father gives the tale whatever form it has—his slow adjustment to the changing times, and to the challenge his own sons make to his old-fashioned authority. The memories end when his life ends, in a mine disaster. Meantime what drama there is in episodic conflicts—outside the family the miners against the mine-owners, within the family the independent spirit of the sons against the father whom they love so genuinely and so thoroughly respect. There are six sons in all, and in the end only Huw,

the baby of them, has stuck to the old ways and the old home. Even more episodic is Huw's bitter experience at school; the minister's sacrifice of love and marriage, and his losing fight against the hypocrisy of the chapel-goers; and the only daughter's unhappy love for the minister.

These conflicts are as confused and unresolved as life itself when it is looked back upon in later years, with little of the dramatist's attempt to clarify motives and pattern them into clear-cut issues of character and the destiny that is determined by character. Why the school-teacher was so brutal to Huw, why the poisonous deacon was so persecutingly unChristian—these are unexplored incidents that go to sum up into the kind of thing life is but not into well-knit drama. Nor is it ever quite clear or convincing why the minister persisted in making his own life and the life of Morgan's daughter so wretched, or why she consented to her unfortunate marriage to the mine-owner's son. In the novel that Richard Llewellyn wrote these things may have all been plain, but in the picture they leave the impression of lapses and cuts, of too many plots thrown into the story without unification and integration.

But there is, inescapably, a unifying mood, lyric and nostalgic, and the final, vivid memory of the picture is of a family which the pressure of change and changing ways broke up and scattered. The music does as much as anything to create and sustain this mood, along with the device of using the voice of Huw, grown up, to keep in our mind that what we see is what he most poignantly remembers of his boyhood. The Welsh singers are always in the background, for atmosphere and the emotional lift, sad or gay, that such singing gives to the screen's action.

Looked at coldly—as coldly as one can with a picture so warm with humanness and its laughter and tears—the superlative thing about the film is its technical style, the perfection of cinematic narrative that it achieves. In any such perfection it is impossible to know what the director and the script-writer individually contributed. Their work merges so successfully that it is one work, and masterly. It is surprising to look

back on the film and realize how much of it is pure visual action, pictures powerfully composed, dramatically photographed, smoothly and eloquently put together. Dialogue is used most sparingly, and always for more reason than just to have some talk going on — always for carrying on the story, for illuminating character, for creating atmosphere and mood. The lilt of Welsh speech is predominant enough to give some unity to the various Irish, American and English dialects that must have been unavoidable with so international a cast. The soundtrack, with its voices, its noises from the mine, its music, is just what it should be—artfully contrived and always the helpful hand-maid of the camera.

Donald Crisp is the backbone of the acting, a fine player at his best, and Roddy McDowell, Sara Algood and the five grown sons make a family that will live long in affectionate memory. Walter Pidgeon is virile and persuasive in a part that is pretty muddled in its motivation, Rhys Williams just right in a part that might easily have seemed caricature, and Eve March and Ethel Griffiths vivid in parts that are just bits. Maureen O'Hara is lovely, but she doesn't get much below the surface—the writing of her role may well be to blame for most of that. The school-master and the deacon are as overacted as a Dickens character is overdrawn. Barry Fitzgerald overacts, too, but he usually slugs a laugh out of you that justifies it.

How Green Was My Valley inevitably brings to mind another picture, strangely neglected by the machinery of exploitation, and far too seldom called to the movie-goers' attention — *The Stars Look Down*. A grimmer film in its picture of the miners' lot, less theatrical, far less handsomely set, unwarmed by the humor and sentiment that Ford and Dunne have put into the Welsh story, but much more skillful in handling its material, much more real, with a much clearer point. It has little appeal to the easy emotions of laughter and tears—it hits at something deeper and more troubling. It shouldn't be forgotten, nor is it likely to be by those who see it.

J.S.H.

Rated Exceptional



A Clash of Personalities in "The Maltese Falcon"

The Maltese Falcon

Screenplay by John Huston from Dashiell Hammett's novel, directed by John Huston, photography by Arthur Edeson. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

Samuel Spade	Humphrey Bogart
Brigid O'Shaughnessy	Mary Astor
Iva Archer	Gladys George
Joel Cairo	Peter Lorre
Lt. Dundy	Barton MacLane
Effie Perine	Lee Patrick
Kaspar Guttman	Sydney Greenstreet
Detective Tom Polhaus	Ward Bond
Miles Archer	Jerome Cowan
Wilmer Cook	Elisha Cook, Jr.
Luke	James Burke
Frank Richman	Murray Alper
Bryan	John Hamilton

FOR yet another time Dashiell Hammett's murder melodrama comes to us on the screen, and it comes fresh and powerful, a study in cupidity, lightened by wit and taut with suspense. The story itself is old and familiar enough. It's all about three factions of a gang of thieves who want to

get their hands on a valuable jewelled falcon that originally belonged to the Knights of Malta; it had first been stolen by pirates and for the last several years had been knocking around in private collections and antique shops, its value unknown thanks to a covering of black enamel. The leader of the interestingly assorted people who make up the criminal company is a girthful gentleman known as "The Fat Man," an individual of talent and resourcefulness with a passion for costly *objets d'art* and not a care in the world as to how he gets them. He it was who discovered the value of the golden bird and but for a spell of doublecrossing among his confederates presumably would have had it. When the film opens the only one who knows where the treasure is happens to be a Brigid O'Shaughnessy, an erstwhile member of the Fat Man's little group and, one gathers, a lady whose past, present and presumable future, nice girls would hardly dream of emulating. She finally pulls down the house on them all when, in an effort to

get rid of her partner in cheating the rest of the gang, she applies to a private detective, one Sam Spade, with a cock and bull story. Spade's partner is murdered while shadowing the lady's superfluous companion and the same evening the companion himself is shot to death. Mr. Spade thereupon digs into the matter, senses a lot of hard cash somewhere, makes several deals with all the factions involved and finally gets hold of the falcon.

It is a good, sound adventure tale for all its folderol of medieval treasure and felonious dilettantes. But its virtue as a movie rests principally on its smart direction and excellent casting. John Huston keeps it moving and glib and realistic. So much so that the obvious plot, the fantastic characters become quite real and very absorbing. He makes his film solidly and few detective movies there are that can stand comparison with it and not fade into the vapidness of contrivement and flossiness. Of course Mr. Huston fortunately had a cast of unusual powers. Humphrey Bogart displays neither swank nor undue erudition. He is a good hardboiled professional detective with a reasonable amount of education and a warm healthy respect for money. And that alone is something to sharpen the jaded appetite of the movie goer who for so long has been fed fat on a procession of super-sleuths with Harvard accents and Bond Street tailors. His Sam Spade is neither a salon wit, a moral idealist nor an amateur in solving knotty problems. He runs his business to earn a living and when the Maltese falcon people turn up he rejoices in the prospect of some rich picking. That prospect plus the murder of his partner and police suspicion that he's mixed up in it plus a native curiosity drive him with intense vigor through the dangerous episodes of the plot, holding the pieces together and giving the whole film a rare earthiness and a vibrant life. The others in the cast are no less adroit. Sidney Greenstreet who plays the Fat Man is as delightful and arrant a scoundrel as you are likely to see in a long time. Mary Astor, who has been doing very nicely in recent films, makes a fine lusty faker of a wench, quite beyond salvation even in the none too squeamish eyes of Mr. Spade. All the rest

in smaller parts act with vitality and subtlety, Peter Lorre being particularly poisonous. And Spade is one detective that few people will dread seeing in a further adventure if so the commanding spirits of Hollywood should resolve.

A.B.

Rated Exceptional

Critical Comment

Bright Confusion

AS may be gathered from the title, wide-eyed trust plays a very minor role in the latest Alfred Hitchcock film, *Suspicion*. Taken from the novel *Before the Fact* by Francis Iles, a grim study of a husband's attempt to murder his wife with her growing more and more suspicious of what his intention is, *Suspicion* is evidently so bothered by the moral question involved that it attempts to stay on the fence through most of the picture and ends up by saying the hero's queer actions and the plot's strange coincidences were caused by worry and chance and that his poor wife was practically frightened out of her pretty wits for no reason at all. The fence-sitting and the conclusion leave one with a confused and unconvinced impression that appreciably mars a beautiful, smartly directed and well acted production.

But the pleasure to be gotten out of its direction, acting and production is by no means small. If Mr. Hitchcock cheats a bit here and there he manages a good many breath-taking sequences and provides a mounting suspense that gives a filip to your viscera more than once. The heart-failure scene, the whole sequence wherein the wife suspects her husband of intending to murder his friend and her frantic efforts to stop him, and finally the climax of the wife and husband in the speeding car on the sea cliff road, all of these have what people like to call "the Hitchcock touch." Then there are the minor touches of his meticulous workmanship, the fascination of the detective with

the modern abstract drawing on the wall of the heroine's house, the horn-rimmed spectacles that she is constantly in need of, the old general's apprehension that the horse radish might have come out of a bottle. And finally the whole brilliant polish of the story's cinematic presentation. These must be ranged against the bad logic and false, over-coincidental leads that irritate and confuse.

Another grumble may be made about Joan Fontaine's role which superficially resembles that which she had in *Rebecca*. But this is cavelling. Given this part, whether it be better or worse, she infuses it with such a wealth of art and emotion as to make a rather troublesome woman, considering her penchant for morbid imaginings, a really sympathetic character, lovely to behold and capable as few actresses are to reveal intense feeling with economy and validity. The three main roles, those of Miss Fontaine, Cary Grant and Nigel Bruce, are sincerely and most intelligently realized. The minor parts are no less well cast; Auriol Lee is a wonderful choice for the lady detective story writer.

But for all this the major flaw in story logic remains, the sets however lovely, the acting however skilful and the direction however thrilling at times, cannot cover it over. With a more uncompromising solution, the one indicated in the original story for instance, all the broken parts could have been pulled together to form a sound integral film and the duplicity in presenting the hero's character, necessitated by the present ending, could be eliminated. Apparently Mr. Hitchcock couldn't manage such a solution and so we have the film, a quite unsatisfying example of a good director's art.

Mr. Reed Looks Back

A CASE of something good but not quite good enough is found in the British production *The Remarkable Mr. Kipps*, wherein good intentions seem to be at cross purposes, leaving a muddy impression. Mr. Wells' book had some obvious comments on social snobbery which are good Wells and a likeable hero full of the human frailties

which is also good. The author liked the hero and treated him with warmth, so that the character's eternal mediocrity is accepted and forgiven. This material, be it noted, is not the best film material since it relies on line and character for development. Now, it seems stodgy and dated, and apparently Carol Reed realized this as much as anyone.

Reed is the director of the film and he works hard to remedy the slowness of the story. To create movement, the scripters show great inventiveness in making scene grow out of scene. Reed uses a very mannered camera to bring into heightened focus the colorful characters he is filming. And his major medicine for the limpness of the story is to turn to his personal recollections of the era and load the background with a wealth of period-piece detail. He brings before our eyes all the ugly furbelows, the bric-a-brac, the foppish manners and costumes and the utterly false conceptions of art in that time. These are beautifully presented, with no bitterness or sarcasm but with a loving nostalgia. They are exaggerated just a shade—never too much. It is an informal, even intimate, method of film-making and contrasts nicely with Reed's direction of *Night Train* and *The Stars Look Down* and proves his versatility. He is just as imaginative here but in a subtler, witty way that is delightful. The pity is that he used this quaint treatment on the story at hand, for there is the root of the matter. Wells and Reed just didn't see eye to eye on what they were telling and that is what makes *Kipps* a stumbling affair in part. Wells is telling a satire using very human characters. Reed is filming a nostalgic comedy. They are both aiming high and well certainly, but not in the same direction.

As it is, the characters are very sharply defined, Michael Redgrave standing out for the sympathy he can draw from the audience while portraying a decidedly doltish hero. There are sound scriptwork and some supporting performances of devilish acidity. The story is good, if dated, and the background is full of gentle humors. But somehow Wells and Reed just aren't assisting each other as they should have been so that the one clutters up the work of the other. Two goods don't necessarily make an excellent.

JUNIOR INTERESTS

An Interview with Walt Disney

HEREWITH is the skeleton of an interview which Walt Disney granted the Young Reviewers after a recent showing and discussion of the new Disney feature cartoon, *Dumbo*. A diligent stenographer took down some of the conversation but she found it too thick and fast, especially from the children. Therefore it is understandably disconnected. However, 4-Star Club Members should be able to see a truer portrait of Mr. Disney's sympathetic and likeable personality from the material as presented than any amount of re-writing could give. The Young Reviewers are, of course, younger than most 4-Star Club members, which accounts for the occasional breaches of formality. Before taking down the fragments of conversation, the stenographer laid the scene thus:

Here is Mr. Disney—quiet, steady gazes. They are pleased and thrilled to see him but their faces retain serious dignity. Ice breaks. A small boy is pushed forward. Mr. Disney goes close to him to discuss matters more intimately as the boy is very shy.

BOY (beaming)—There are lots of things to say. But, I liked it—I liked it!

ANOTHER BOY—For all the pictures, there are dolls in the stores. I suppose they are for publicity, but I don't know — I don't like the dolls. I like the pictures but not those dolls!

DISNEY—I see what you mean, but you know, sometimes the stores use those dolls to sell things—dresses and things like that—and the dolls help that way, too.

GIRL—I liked *Dumbo* better than *Fantasia*. I liked *Fantasia* too, but I like each picture better. Perhaps I am progressing. I think the pictures are all good, so it must be me who is progressing.

BOY (to Disney)—You pronounced it *Fantasi-a*. Is it that or *Fantasia*?

DISNEY—Well, you see I was in South America and there they pronounce it *Fantasi-a*.

BOY—Dumbo is always having help from the Mouse, just like Pinocchio. He doesn't seem to do anything on his own, like Pinocchio had the Cricket to tell him what to do. I don't know. Why doesn't Dumbo know what to do himself?

ANOTHER BOY—I've noticed that in some of the pictures, I guess it repeats, doesn't it? I mean, when you find out something that's good in one picture, you can use it in another can't you?

DISNEY—Yes, that's true. We try out certain things—techniques. When we find something that is right, we stick to it. But we're always trying something new, too.

BOY—How do you work it, when the character comes right up to something? And then how do you turn him around again?

DISNEY—We try all sorts of ways. If necessary, we make them walk backwards to the thing so they won't have to turn around again.

GIRL—How does your technique work? I mean, how do you work out all those separate things and then put them together?

DISNEY—It's sort of like a word. You know when you're learning it or trying to find out the meaning, you break it into syllables. That's what we do with the big, complicated movements. We break them into syllables, first.

CHILD—Don't you find that it's dangerous sometimes, repeating an idea, like Jiminy Cricket advising Pinocchio and then the Mouse advising Dumbo. If that goes on, maybe it will be repetitious.

DISNEY—M—m, I see what you mean. That's an idea — —

BOY (with rather large ears, himself)—Why do your characters always have to have defects? Dumbo, for example?

DISNEY (being a true diplomat)—Well, we all have defects. I have big feet!

CHILD—Now about that repetition, what will you do?

DISNEY—I'm afraid in my new picture, *Bambi*, we've got two helpers, a skunk and a rabbit, as sort of companion-advisers. You know how it works out, you have the book, and sometimes you can't translate everything the same as it is in the book because you're working in two different mediums.

VOICES—Yes—Yes, of course.

BOY—Sometimes it sounds more real when you read it. Then you don't like to see it. Like with the previews—but I like your previews, you don't tell everything that's going to be in the picture.

DISNEY—Sometimes it doesn't hurt when you read it first. Remember *Gone With the Wind*? Lots of people read it and then wanted to see it, to compare with the book and their ideas of it.

CHILD—In your home do you decorate your walls with those characters? (Disney figures were painted on the walls of the office.)

DISNEY—We live with Mickey Mouse and the others so much in the studio, we don't want to live with them at home, too.

CHILD (Thoughtfully)—In other words, you don't have fantasy in your home?

CHILD—After a long run, do you review your pictures again?

DISNEY—Yes, I saw *Snow White* two years after the opening.

CHILD—When you were young, was there someone you wanted to be like—just like some of the characters in your cartoons? I mean, did you ever want to be like some of the characters in the cartoon—someone you dreamed about?

DISNEY—Yes! I wanted to be like Charlie Chaplin.

CHILD—But you didn't want his big feet!

DISNEY—No, but I would like his money!

Everyone had a good time at this interview, due in no small part to Mr. Disney's kindness. The Reviewers were especially favored when, after the interview, a few of them were invited to partake in a national broadcast the following week on the "We the People" program. The cartoonist spoke from Hollywood while the Reviewers voiced their opinions from the New York studios. The Young Reviewers hope that Mr. Disney had as enjoyable a time as they did at the personal meeting, although they can be pretty assured of this from the reluctance with which the meeting was ended. Everyone wanted to continue on with the talk but that was impossible. It was good to find Mr. Disney as enjoyable as any of his screen characters, which is high praise, indeed.

The Young Reviewers on:

"DUMBO" and "IT STARTED WITH EVE"

IN the past month, the National Board's Young Reviewers have seen two comedies and with the same reactions as accorded by maturer critics. *Dumbo* was, of course, a natural and was voted "excellent," while *It Started With Eve*, wherein Charles Laughton exhibits his rug-cutting prowess, was voted "very good." In both cases, the Young Reviewers learned very little and found nothing very worth remembering, which is typical of their attitude toward comedies. They considered the plots clever and amusing although no great shakes as stories in themselves. They just enjoyed them as refreshing comedies. The three or four critics who did learn anything put it strikingly: from *Dumbo* they realized that

"a mother's love is the greatest thing in the world in animals, too," (girl, 13); "elephants are not to be laughed at," (boy, 13); and the "nature of people," (girl, 13). The platitudes demonstrated in the Durbin film were, "Don't fall in love with somebody if you already are," (boy, 12) and "never pinch a lady," (boy, 12). These sample comments may seem to be an irrelevant selection but the Young Reviewers, like any movie-going body, find it impossible to point out the emotional patterns, the social usages and customs, the lessons in good behavior which are inherent in every well-made film. That is matter for the sociologists and psychologists.

In *It Started With Eve* the Reviewers were delighted with Charles Laughton's performance and his "ability to portray comedy parts which has never before been shown,"

(girl, 13), but they didn't go all-out for him. "I think the scene in the night-club was silly, some of it could be cut out," (girl, 12). "I think that dancing was a little too silly. Charles Laughton is an excellent actor and his part in the picture he played very well, and then when it got to that scene it made him slightly cheap, low-class. It sort of ruined his part," (girl, 13). "I think Charles Laughton isn't the type to do that type of acting," (boy, 12). But, said a girl, 13, "Laughton put it over pretty well which goes to prove he is a pretty good actor." They left it at that.

The feeling about Deanna Durbin in her maturer role was that "she is a good actress besides singing," (girl, 12). "But she will never be a Bette Davis," (girl, 14). They apparently enjoyed Robert Cummings' work, too—"when he is acting dumb he does it very well," (boy, 13). One boy, 11, started an interesting discussion by saying "maybe if he had been tried in other types he would be better." Laughton's assuming a comic role set them wondering about the star system and typed characters. "Cummings is still too young for different roles," (boy, 12). "If they are good actors it doesn't make any difference how young they are," (girl, 13). A girl, 14, put her finger on the real reason for not putting less experienced actors in varied roles when she said, "When a studio puts on a picture, they don't say 'Now Mr. Cummings, we will see what you can do in this.' The studio has to be sure of what the public will think about a picture. Say Universal was an experimental studio, which no studio is, and they tried Cummings in something besides comedy and he was awful. The public wouldn't like it and it would be a terrible mark against him. If Charles Laughton failed, sooner or later people would go to see him again, but Cummings would have to be built up all over again." This is, of course, an unfortunate fact with the star system and even the wisest sage has no effective remedy as yet.

Further comments on the film were: "That scene where she cries at the piano — they have that scene in practically every Durbin movie—she starts to sing and then to cry. It gets a little corny after a while," (boy, 12). "I think the title was very confusing,"

(boy, 11), to which the leader replied, "Sometimes titles don't have anything to do with a picture."

Like the Exceptional Photoplay Committee's discussion of *Dumbo*, the Young Reviewers found it hard to talk at length on the virtues of the film for there is no good point of attack. Any particular phase of it that might be mentioned can only be followed by superlative adjectives, which is monotonous. Facing the latest novel cartoon-feature, one can only wonder, as did a girl, 13, "How many new things can you invent?" In the course of discussion, however, many comments were made worth noting. At least half of the Reviewers selected the pink elephant sequence as the most impressive, echoing the view of older critics. One girl, 13, noted that "about the pink elephants—that's an expression. When you are supposed to be drunk they say you see pink elephants." But this was old stuff to all the others—not worth talking about because it was so familiar.

"It's a story about animals but it is more than about animals," (girl, 13). "The whole thing was unusual. It was all a caricature of people," (girl, 13). "The music was a very clever background," (girl, 13). "The music helped but the idea was enough without the music," (girl, 13). "The colors brought out the fantasy," (girl, 13). "The color added depth to it," (girl, 13). "It was as if the animals ruled the world as we do now," (girl, 13). "That's just fantasy," (girl, 13)—reply: "That's what I said." "It was a success story in a way, the way the elephants looked down on Dumbo and then he became a success," (boy, 14). "The story was for a business man who has an hour to wait for a train because it takes your mind off troubles and it's just an hour long," (boy, 12). "I heard one man say to his friend coming out, 'Didn't it calm your nerves?'" (girl, 13).

There was a little argument over the human clowns who turned to the bottle after Dumbo had made a success as a fellow clown. "I happen to know some clowns; whenever they have thrilled the audience they come out feeling very happy, and Disney brought them out very well," (girl, 13). "I think that wasn't a very favorable impression of

clowns. You saw them behind the scenes and they drank and were mean," (boy, 13). But others felt differently. "I don't think their character was too mean. Everybody will get excited with success. They drank up their success and glory and any person is very conceited when they are successful," (girl, 13). "I don't think they meant to be mean," (boy, 12).

There was also much to say on the pathetic human ties between the ostracized mother and the freak child which Disney has made strike right to the heart with such deep feeling. "When you feel sorry for Dumbo, and when Dumbo was so scared, it teaches you something," (girl, 13). "Children wouldn't be so rough. It makes me feel like that, when all the elephants were talking and he went back and the little mouse came out and started to make noise and the tears came down," (boy, 8, referring to the sequence preceding the lullaby scene). "I think it was a little too sad. Cartoons aren't meant to be sad. The beginning and the scene where he goes to his mother were sad," (boy, 13). But a girl, 13, did the unusual thing by frankly admitting her tears knowing that she enjoyed the cry. "I missed some of it because I was crying. It really was beautiful. It reminded me of so many things—it was just so inspiring." The chances are that others cried also but that, after all, is a matter between them individually and the little misfit, Dumbo.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

f* **ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN**—Frederic March, Martha Scott. Based on the book by Hartzell Spence. Directed by Irving Rapper. This film because of its unusual subject matter—the pastorate and struggles of a Methodist minister and his family—deserves a great deal of praise for its tact and sincerity, praise for the stars and the rest of the cast and for the director, all of whom could so easily have fallen into embarrassing theatricalism. This is avoided and the film is made an interesting and moving tale of faith and faithfulness and self-sacrifice, leavened with a gentle humor. Miss Scott plays her role with a compelling and touching sincerity; and Mr. March displays in his fine interpretation of the minister an understanding, a human portrait of inflexible integrity and warmth. The main weakness in the film as a movie lies in its slowness, a

circumstance apt to characterize an episodic, biographical motion picture. All told, however, the film is a very successful preachment of liberal faith and decent living with few weaknesses as a work of cinematic art. Warners.

SELECTED PICTURES OF THE MONTH

- f **CHOCOLATE SOLDIER, THE** — Nelson Eddy, Rise Stevens, Nigel Bruce. Based on "The Guardsman" by Ferenc Molnar. Directed by Roy Del Ruth. The film follows the old Lunt-Fontaine version of "The Guardsman" interlarded with music from Oscar Straus' operetta. The singing of Miss Stevens is the movie's main fine feature. For the rest it's slow moving and save for Nigel Bruce rather ordinarily played and clumsily directed. The sets run to the lavish side. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **DOWN MEXICO WAY**—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette. Original screen story by Dorrell and Stuart McGowan. Directed by Joseph Santley. This is another feather-weight Autry opus which is quite likeable as a western. The villains, believe it or not, are some phoney movie producers who even resort to some of their actors' tricks by holding up a carload of money. It seems these producers sell a lot of stock in a "location" picture which they never intend to make. But Gene uncovers their plot when they are about to fleece a Mexican town. The music is attractively presented and there is not a breath of reality to it, making a very pleasant film. Republic.
- fj **DRIFTIN' KID, THE** — Tom Keene, Betty Miles. Original screen story by Robert Emmett and Frances Kavanaugh. Directed by Robert Tansey. A tenderfoot rancher who sells horses to the Mexican government is being gunned for by a gang which wants to get hold of his property. An investigator of that government crosses the border to find out who rustled some horses that had been bought and, being the exact image of the rancher, he poses as him and thus discovers who the chief villain is. A rather average western with the usual fixings. Monogram.
- m **FEMININE TOUCH, THE**—Rosalind Russell, Don Ameche and Kay Francis. Original screen story by George Oppenheimer, Edmund L. Hartmann and Ogden Nash. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. The start of this film is slick comedy, ribbing the border-line literary set which sits around analyzing emotions instead of experiencing them. Jealousy among adults is the emotion in question and an author, publisher, secretary and wife get messed up in it. Miss Russell, as the wife, doesn't talk their language, however, and her touch is the human one. Sadly enough, everything sloughs off into an endlessness that almost vitiates every other virtue of the picture. Even witty acting and inventive direction can't save such a morass of writing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj **GUNMAN FROM BODIE, THE** — Buck Jones, Tim McCoy, Ray Hatton. Original screen story by Jess Bowers. Directed by

Spencer Bennet. The Rough Riders posing as an outlaw, a marshal and a cook, track down and capture a gang of rustlers who have been murdering and fleeing honest ranchers. The film has the obviousness peculiar to its kind, but the tale is told swiftly and with a fine straight-forwardness that takes it out of the average class. Monogram.

- m **HOT SPOT** — Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Carole Landis. Based on the novel "I Wake Up Screaming" by Steve Fisher. Directed by H. Bruce Humberstone. The original title of the novel, "I Wake Up Screaming," catches the spirit nicely, for this is a taut murder-mystery with gruesomeness and suspense. The question is: Who murdered the glamorized hash-slinger? and Mature seems the most likely suspect. But things work out otherwise, of course. The script, utilizing flashbacks, is none the less jolting and the camera-work and assisting players arouse considerable excitement. Laird Cregar stands out for his wry romancing. 20th Century-Fox.

- f **INTERNATIONAL LADY** — Ilona Massey, George Brent, Basil Rathbone. Original screen story by E. Lloyd Sheldon and Jack DeWitt. Directed by Tim Whelan. As may be gathered from the title, the film is all about a beautiful singer who follows the road made glamorous in the last war by Mata Hari but winds up in a much healthier condition. Two men, one from the FBI and the other from the CID (Scotland Yard), do the work of running her down and with her the ring of saboteurs who are wrecking Flying Fortresses at sea with the aid of a corroding chemical placed in gas tanks. Of course they both fall in love with her and she, staunch spy that she is, saves the life of the American, much to the chagrin of her associates. The movie is handsomely made up but might have been better with more cutting and a little more suspense. Miss Massey sings well and the other members of the cast abet her charm and talent with well turned out characterizations of their own. United Artists.

- m **MERCY ISLAND** — Ray Middleton, Gloria Dickson and Otto Kruger. Based on the novel by Theodore Pratt. Directed by William Morgan. This is a rather melodramatic film about a noted lawyer who develops an insane attitude toward his fellow-fishermen when their party is marooned on one of the keys off the coast of Florida. The party has physical hardships as well, due to the lack of food and the insects, and their relief does not come until an alligator kills the insane man. The film offers an instructive description on the make-up of the keys and the "Conchs" who inhabit them—a hardy group of old settlers who have managed to remain apart from the world. Republic.

- f **MOON OVER HER SHOULDER** — Lynn Bari and John Sutton. Original screen story by Helen Vreeland Smith and Eve Golden. Directed by Alfred Werker. To judge by

appearances, the Rossiter family is a happy one with seven years of marriage behind them, a pair of twins to enliven the house—and with the father making a success with his book on Happy Marriage. It is only when he professionally advises second honeymoons for other married couples that the Rossiter household begins to shake. However, after the wife has had a minor affair with a sea-going young man, the couple reunites on a much closer basis. 20th Century-Fox.

- f **NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK**—W. C. Fields, Gloria Jean. Original screen story by Otis Cribblecoblis. Directed by Edward Cline. Apparently Mr. Fields was just let loose in the studio to make this one, and the results will leave his devotees aching from laughter. There is just a hint of a plot in which Fields is selling his script to a film producer for a little cash with which to support his niece on a singing career. From that point, anything goes! There is a wealth of good Fieldsiana plus some pleasant bits from a host of lesser people all joined in an original surrealist sort of hodge-podge. One must overlook some interludes of dullness when the humor is spread a little thin, knowing it will brighten in a minute. Universal.

- f **NEW WINE**—Ilona Massey and Alan Curtis. Original screen story by Howard Estabrook and Nicholas Jory. Directed by Reinhold Schunzel. A none too inspired recounting of a romantic episode in the life of Franz Schubert. Fleeing the draft into the Austrian army, he arrives at a farm in Hungary and falls in love with its lady manager and carries her back with him to Vienna. She wants him to persevere in his composing but leaves him when he proposes to marry her and take a job teaching to get a weekly salary. The film carries over all the operetta tone that seems to attach to any theatrical depiction of Schubert and really doesn't help to make this version very original. The best thing in the picture is the rendering of several of the more popular compositions, a few of which Miss Massey sings quite nicely. The casting could be better, the direction much less syrupy, and the sets more natural. For all this, the film is so effectively enmeshed in its web of music that interest does not flag in a story that if played straight would be quite the boy-meets-girl stuff with a sad ending. Much of the pathos and moving quality of the movie depends on the adroit use of the score. United Artists.

- f **SHADOW OF THE THIN MAN**—William Powell, Myrna Loy. Based upon characters created by Dashiell Hammett. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke II. Nick Charles solves another murder mystery and exposes a ring of crooked gamblers. The film never attains the ease and freshness that distinguished *The Thin Man*, but it offers pleasant entertainment with a plot full of suspense, good acting by the stars as the suave young couple with their young son and their dog Asta, and plenty of amusing comedy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f** **SMALL TOWN DEB** — Jane Withers, Jane Darwell and Bruce Edwards. Original screen story by Jerrie Walters. Directed by Harold Schuster. Miss Withers is the youngest member of a middle-class family which is torn with rather common problems. The older sister has a social-climbing complex, the brother is having date trouble and father has some taxes looming without the wherewithal to meet them. However, Jane manages to put the family interests above her own and straighten out all these problems—and incidentally she is allowed to take over the drummer's chores at the big dance which was her unexpressed wish. 20th Century-Fox.
- f** **SUNDOWN** — Gene Tierney, Bruce Cabot, George Sanders. Original screen story by Barre Lyndon. Directed by Henry Hathaway. Most of this film is fine escapist adventure involving handsome pageantry which is beautifully outfitted and filmed. The story is one of British heroism in British East Africa, where a supply of guns is being filtered into the native tribes to create a Nazi-inspired uprising. There is an exotic lady mixed up in the doings and some exciting, fantastic fire-works before the uprising is quelled. So far so good. But there are also some efforts at timely flag-waving which—well, suffice to say that the film still holds considerable interest, visually. United Artists.
- f** **UNHOLY PARTNERS**—Edward G. Robinson, Edward Arnold and Laraine Day. Original screen story by Earl Baldwin, Bartlett Cormack and Lesser Samuels. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. A rather well-worn plot about the establishment and growth of a tabloid newspaper during the prohibition era in New York, but very well written, acted and directed. The partnership hinted at in the title is that of the editor and a rich gambler who furnishes the money to start the paper in the hope of muzzling bad publicity. When Robinson won't play ball, fire-works break out and give the film a good deal of gun play and such. It's a good rendering of those quaint days when drinking was a lark and everybody was making money on Wall Street. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- m** **WEEKEND FOR THREE**—Dennis O'Keefe, Jane Wyatt, Philip Reed. Original screen story by Bud Schulberg. Directed by Irving Reis. Dorothy Parker and Alan Campbell have injected some witty turns to this domestic comedy and the actors are very pleasant to watch. For these reasons, the familiarity of many of the situations does not stand out. The plot centering in the male weekend guest who overstays his welcome to the point of almost separating his host and hostess provides a good lesson on how to bedevil one's host, if that is what anyone is interested in doing. RKO-Radio.
- SHORT SUBJECTS**
- Informationals**
- fj** **ARMY CHAMPIONS**—A Pete Smith Specialty showing how the selected men are being trained and armed to be the best soldiers in the world.
- There are many interesting shots of target practice and tactics. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **BUENOS AIRES TODAY** (Columbia Tour) — Glimpses of the progressive metropolis of Argentina. Columbia.
- f** **DOG OBEDIENCE** (RKO Pathe Sportscope)—Prize dogs strut like professional models in this exhibition of their talents for obeying their masters. RKO-Radio.
- f** **FOOTBALL THRILLS, 1940** (Pete Smith Specialty)—A new season being upon us, this review of last year's high spots, amusingly compiled, will warm us up. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **GALLUP POLL, THE** (Columbia Panoramic)—A review of the methods and some of the more timely findings of Dr. Gallup's statistical survey of opinion. Columbia.
- f** **HIGHWAY OF FRIENDSHIP** (Adventurous Cameraman)—An inviting picture of the highway extending from the U. S. to Buenos Aires, with an accent on Good Neighborliness. 20th Century-Fox.
- f** **HOBBIES** (Passing Parade)—A well-made review of a few pretty ambitious hobbies which approach real art. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **INFORMATION PLEASE No. 2** — There are several pantomimed questions in this issue which are especially good for the experts, the guest being Howard Lindsay. RKO-RADIO.
- f** **INTERNATIONAL FORUM No. 3, THE**—"Will Democracy Survive?" A discussion of the place of America in the war, decidedly interventionist in flavor, featuring Fanny Hurst, Admiral Yarnell, Senator Claude Pepper and Johannes Steel. Columbia.
- f** **MARCH OF TIME No. 3** — "Sailors With Wings"—A well made and informative history of the Navy's interest in flying, with a detailed account of the functions of naval aircraft at present. RKO-Radio.
- f** **ROAD IN INDIA, A** (Fascinating Journey) — A colored film of the very primitive modes of travel on a main highway of India. Paramount.
- f** **SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 3** — Showing Leo Carillo's Sunday Services for cowhands on horseback which are held outdoors, with some stars. Columbia.
- m** **TELL TALE HEART, THE**—Poe's short story, about a murderer who was driven to confession by the insistent heart-beat he imagined long after the body was cold, makes an interesting short drama with opportunities for experiment in technique. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **TRIUMPH WITHOUT DRUMS** (Carey Wilson Miniature) — An absorbing account of Harvey Wiley's long years of struggle to make the Pure Food and Drug Act a law of the land and thus protect the people from poisoning by rotten foods. Recommended for school use. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- MUSICALS**
- f** **DOIN' THE TOWN** — Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra with Helen Parrish singing. Universal.
- f** **SKYLINE SERENADE**—Ted Fio-Rito and band accompany some supper-club entertainers quite pleasantly. Universal.
- CARTOONS AND COMEDIES**
- f** **COME BACK MISS PIPPS** (Our Gang Comedy) —The Gang stages a little demonstration of how good their teacher really is so that the Board of Education changes its mind about firing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **FLICKER MEMORIES** (Pete Smith Specialty) The old-time screen melodrama, "Passion of Horse-Pistol-Pete," with wise-cracking commentary. Quite amusing. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f** **HOW TO TAKE A VACATION** — Robert Benchley tells all in this film of four men off for a good outing in the wilds. Paramount.
- fj** **VILLAGE SMITHY, THE** (Walt Disney Donald Duck Cartoon)—Donald Duck primarily inspired by Longfellow is reduced to exasperated Donald-Duckhood attempting to interest a jennie ass in a pair of new shoes. RKO-Radio.
- fj** **WHAT'S COOKIN'** (Walter Lantz Cartoon)—Woody Woodpecker refuses to believe that winter is at his door until starvation has all but set in, but he manages to survive. Universal.

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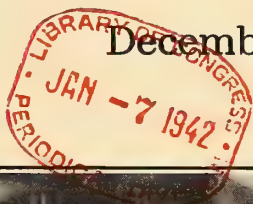
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Scene from "Target for Tonight" (See page 10)

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COPY 1

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile audience. Pictures suitable for children under 12.
- *—Recommended as above the average "selected" picture.

STARRED SELECTED PICTURES

- f* EN SJOMAN TILL HAST (A Sailor on Horseback)—Edvard Persson, Karl-Arne Holmsten. Scenario by Edvard Persson. Ted Berthels, Henry Richter. Directed by Emil A. Pehrsson. A delightful satiric comedy that should charm even those who are ignorant of Swedish. It has fine music, the exquisite scenery of the southern province of Scania, the romantic charm of Mr. Holmsten and the exuberant jollity of Mr. Persson. With typical Scandinavian love of detail and character drawing the film dawdles perhaps over lovely shots of castles, farms and animals, but these are well worth the time spent. For people who understand the language the film is pure delight. (Swedish Dialogue with English sub-titles) Scandia.
- m* H. M. PULHAM, ESQ.—Hedy Lamarr, Robert Young, Ruth Hussey. Based on the novel by John P. Marquand. Directed by King Vidor. Mr. Marquand's novel provides a romance cloaked in unusual and often brilliant satire as handled in the films. It is, of course, the memories of life's high-points as looked back upon by a middle-aged Harvard grad about to write his history for the alumni magazine. As an analysis of just how sticky and cloying Boston blue-blood can be, especially when in contact with a bit of Greenwich Village, it is delightful. As a tale of passion and renunciation it takes itself a little more seriously and bogs a bit. But the stars have never shown more honest acting ability and the writers and decorators have thought up some shrewd and witty comment as they look back upon life of the past few decades. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

LAND, THE—U. S. Department of Agriculture. See Exceptional Photoplays Department, p. 11.

SWAMP WATER—20th Century-Fox. See Exceptional Photoplays Department, p. 9.

TARGET FOR TONIGHT — Warner Bros. See Exceptional Photoplays Department, p. 10.

TWO-FACED WOMAN—Metro. See Exceptional Photoplays Department, p. 13.

SELECTED PICTURES

- f BODY DISAPPEARS, THE—Jeffrey Lynn, Jane Wyman. Original story by Scott Darling and Erna Lazarus. Directed by D. Ross Lederman. No, this isn't really a mystery but another of those comedies about the invisible body which the experimenting scientist can't bring back to visibility at the right time. Edward Everett Horton is the heckled scientist in this one and the body is that of a young man about to be married to the wrong girl. There are some very amusing situations and always the trick camera-work which make the film entertaining unless one has seen too many of this special type. Warner.
- f CADET GIRL — Carole Landis, George Montgomery. Original screen story by Jack Andrews and Richard English. Directed by Ray McCarey. For the patriotic note in the ending, this film will get by. It tells of a cadet on furlough who plays a hot piano in a band and falls in love with the band's singer. She, however, takes things into her own hands and applies all the lures she can plant to send him off her track and back to West Point. Because he has the military life in his veins and has an obligation to carry out to his deceased father, he does return. The title is a little misleading since almost all of the action takes place in the supper club where his two loves—for country and for girl—are debated. 20th Century-Fox.
- f COME ON DANGER—Tim Holt, Frances Neal, Ray Whitley. Original screen story by Norton S. Parker and Bennett Cohen. Directed by Edward Killy. This should please not only the Western fan alone, for it is directed much more smoothly and with a lighter touch than the usual western. There's plenty of action in its story of a Texas Ranger who is sent out to arrest a girl for murder; the characters are believable, a few cowboy songs are pleasantly introduced, and the humor skilfully handled. RKO Radio.
- f CONFIRM OR DENY—Don Ameche, Joan Bennett, Roddy McDowall, John Loder. Based on the story by Henry Wales and Samuel Fuller. Directed by Archie Mayo.

(Continued on page 17)

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New National Board President

AT its annual meeting last month the Directors of the National Board of Review elected Mr. Quincy Howe to succeed Dr. A. A. Brill as its President. Mr. Howe will assume his new office after the December meeting of the Board of Directors.

Mr. Howe is perhaps best known to the public for his radio news commentaries on WQXR.

Since 1932 he has been one of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union, and since 1939 Chairman of the National Council on Freedom from Censorship. He has written several books, the most recent of them "The News and How To Understand It," and he is head of the editorial department of the publishing house of Simon and Schuster, after an editorial career beginning with the Atlantic Monthly Company, and on the staffs of *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Living Age*.

Mr. Howe, the son of M. A. DeWolf Howe and Fanny Quincy Howe, was born

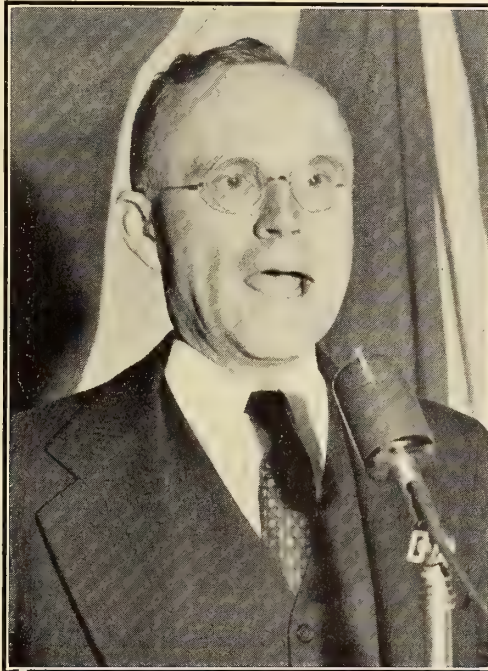
in Boston on August 17, 1900. He was educated at St. George's School in Newport, R. I., at Harvard and at Christ's College, Cambridge, England.

Mr. Howe's remarks at the Board's Annual Luncheon indicate his attitude toward the principles which are the basis of the Board's work. He said:

I understand this conference has as its subject "Movies in a Democracy." I would just take the word "Democracy" for a half second as a text in the same sense that Humpty-Dumpty used to use words. You will remember when he was quizzed by Alice on the use of a certain word he said that if he used a word it meant just what he chose it to mean. That it would mean so-and-so, Alice said it was rather

a question. "No," he answered. "It is a question of who is to be the master."

In the case of the word "Democracy" the meaning that I, at least, choose to give to it in the work that we have to do—is the ex-



Quincy Howe

tension and spread of more varied entertainment, more new things on the screen.

My main connection in the past with this kind of work has been in the fight against censorship. That, in a sense, is the negative part of the picture, to prevent the sort of thing that these censors up in New York State have been trying to do and have done—that finally we, through the Council of ours, and the Civil Liberties Union, have succeeded in breaking through on one issue.

I think that there is something more than that, something on the positive side, that the Board should do. Censorship is something that other organizations have to take care of and to fight.

What this Board and its groups should do is to see that the better type of film is produced and supported and encouraged in every way, through the public, through the producer and the rest. That is our job, to extend more and different kinds of films, more and different kinds of pictures that make it

possible for better pictures to be encouraged. In no sense should it be negative. Censorship can be left to others to oppose.

Our aim—and in-so-far as I shall be connected with it, my aim—certainly will be to do all that can be done to encourage the spread of more varied and better ideas through the screen. It is under a system that I call democracy in which that kind of spread of free ideas is permitted. What distinguishes the man from the beast is the ability of man to articulate, to explain, to say things, to express himself. And the screen is one medium through which we express ourselves.

If we live in a democracy, as I understand a democracy, it will be one in which the screen will speak and talk as freely as any part of a community. That, to my mind, is a real Democracy that all of us here would want to encourage in every way we can. We will do it in our work on the National Board through the motion picture screen.

Hollywood as an Expression of America

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

Mr. Crowther, motion picture critic of the New York Times, gave this talk at the recent annual Conference of the Board.

I believe the acknowledged way to begin a talk about motion pictures is to tell a story about a certain well known Hollywood producer who has a reputation for making very funny slips of the tongue. I would prefer not to be quite so obvious, but there is a story that I recently heard which is appropriate to my position on the panel of speakers today.

It seems that this gentleman had just started a new picture. He had hired a writer to work on it and conferences had begun. The writer was a man who had never met the producer, so he was curious to know whether it was true that the gentleman made these strange and amusing malapropisms.

All through the discussion of the story, the writer listened attentively. He did not hear anything, and was just beginning to suspect that the gentleman's reputation had

been highly abused, when the producer turned to him and said, "Now, we have finished our story conferences and we have everything lined up. You are going to write your script. Give us a good job, boy, I am depending on you. You know you are doing the writing; you know you are the main clog in this machine."

Miss Elizabeth Hawes, who is going to speak to you later on, is a fashion designer. Mr. Garson Kanin is a film director, and I am a writer. I hope I am not going to be the clog in this machine.

I believe you appreciate what I mean when I say that I was invited to speak with you today on the subject of "Hollywood as an Expression of America." That is a topic which can create probably the most complete forensic bottleneck that I can imagine. Shelley Hamilton suggested the topic to me at luncheon the other day. He very generously acknowledged that it had possibilities. It has, indeed.

I think one of the larger of its possibilities is that of getting us all into a nice big fight, which I would enjoy myself after this discussion, if you care to start slinging the fists at me.

But, the question of Hollywood's significance in the American scene, in American life, is one of the most hotly discussed topics outside the halls of Congress now, fortunately.

Please do not get the impression that I mean to be didactic in the things that I am going to say. I am merely passing along to you the observations and the opinions of one who sees a great many moving pictures in a year, whose job it is to follow the work of this vast industry, and who makes an endeavor to keep more or less in touch with the thought and opinion of our times.

It seems to me that the question of Hollywood as an expression of America can be approached from three points of view. The first is a consideration of the accuracy with which Hollywood, or the pictures made by Hollywood, reflect America as it actually is. This is probably the easiest of the three approaches to make. For this country, this America, like Caesar's wife, is many things to many men.

America is many things to many people, and it is much too vast to comprehend in one phrase. Therefore, the question is not how much does Hollywood express America as a whole, but how close do the movies come to a realistic conception of our lives in their countless detail? How accurate are individual pictures in their expositions of the various phases of life that they touch upon? I am speaking now of feature films, of course, not of documentary.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not a millionaire playboy, and I am not married to Irene Dunne, or Carole Lombard, or Margaret Sullavan, so I cannot declare from my own experience that the amazing number of husband-wife comedies which have been turned out by Hollywood this year do not give an accurate impression of domestic life among the smarter sets. They may. Perhaps they do. But I can assure you that they do not represent the common experience of the average American citizen.

I have not been to a training camp, so I cannot tell you positively that life there is not quite as jovial as it appears in the numerous service films which we have seen. Sergeant Garson Kanin—or now that he has been mustered out just plain Citizen Kanin—can probably correct me if I am wrong. But I doubt very much if you will find around the training camps a great many Bud Abbotts and Lou Costellos chasing one another about. I do not think you will see Bob Hope dashing in and out of the General's office with Dorothy Lamour in shimmering hose chasing after him, or in front of him.

I have never worked in a department store, so I cannot tell you definitely whether the owners are all like Charlie Coburn in *The Devil and Miss Jones*. I have never been a high voltage lineman so I do not know whether it is true, as it certainly appeared in that movie with Eddie Robinson, that someone invariably gets killed every time they go out to fix the wires.

I have never been a Don Juan Ameche so I do not know what the proper reaction is when Alice Faye cuddles up to one.

But I do not believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the motion pictures of today, or of any time for that matter, have in the majority of cases reflected life as it is actually lived. I doubt if you believe they have either.

Last night I made a very careful check on the pictures which I have been seeing this year. There were close to 200 of them. I could not find more than four or five which I felt gave a true and accurate approximation of the segments of life which they pretended to represent.

Literally speaking, therefore, I am convinced that Hollywood does not express America.

However, this brings us to the second approach. Does Hollywood represent America, not as it is but as the majority of people in this country want to think it is? Are we in a mass a nation of day dreamers, of Pollyannas, of happy enders? Do we all want to escape from reality? Do motion pictures express our true psychological patterns? That is a question.

Recently I was talking to a refugee, a

young man with a very good brain who goes a great deal to American movies. I asked him why, expecting him to say that he goes to movies to hear the language or to see pictures of places in America, or because he is interested in the production of pictures, just to see how they are made. He gave me a very interesting answer.

He said, "There is still abundant hope in this country. People still believe that if you work hard you get ahead and become the boss of your business. Girls are still confident that some day a Prince Charming will come along, that he may even be waiting around the next corner in a shiny roadster, there to pick them up. My friend, I like that."

I have no doubt that the same feeling resides in the hearts and minds of millions of our own citizens.

When Mr. Kanin made that very delightful picture, *Tom, Dick and Harry*, he knew exactly what he was doing. He knew that young girls all over the country dream in the same way. Millions of women assume that life could be just as wonderful as it seems to be on the screen, if Clark Gable were prowling around the penthouse in his bedroom slippers.

I do not think that we can deny, as much as we might like to sometimes, that Hollywood has certain formulae which express an American attitude, the attitude that everything can be rosy if the big break, or the right man comes along. It is possible, it is likely in fact, that this attitude is largely encouraged by the motion pictures themselves. People have vague notions that they are worthy of better things. I am speaking of the mass of people who have not the better things, a better way of life. They go to the movies and they see something of what they dream. But often they see a little more, so that little more is added to their store of beautiful illusions. And thus a snowball is created and a very happy concept of what life might be is built up.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that this is necessarily healthy, or that it is tending to create a more solid public morale. There are a great many things about this creation of illusion which I think are of

a rather unhealthy nature. I am simply saying that it does exist and that Hollywood in this respect does express an American attitude.

This leads to a third approach, the third and last. Does Hollywood—meaning the motion picture industry itself, not the product now, but the men who control the industry—does Hollywood express or represent a true American economic concept today? Is it justifiable in the light of our history and experience that this industry should be regarded as it is by most of the executives in it as a business, pure and simple—mostly simple.

I am not trying to inject a radical or socialistic idea into this discussion, nor am I unmindful of the many very practical and difficult economic problems in this industry. But you of the Board of Review have gathered in this three-day conference to discuss movies in a democracy. I am simply wondering whether the industry as it is directed today is truly mindful of its responsibility in a democracy.

I have argued long and heatedly with many people who work in motion pictures, and I found this generally to be true; the men who sell the pictures, from the production heads to the lowliest salesman or theatre manager, are primarily interested in the box office possibilities, the grosses, and they argue that so long as they give the public what the public will pay to see they are performing a sufficient public service.

On the other hand, most of the men who work in the creative side of the industry—the writers, directors, actors, cameramen, scene designers, film cutters—are interested mainly in making better pictures, breaking away from routines, getting, if you wish, more reality, more of an expression of America as it is into their product. They are in constant conflict with the distribution side of the industry. And it just happens that the distribution side has the last word.

I do not pretend to answer this question today, but I am asking it generally: Does the present commercial emphasis in this peculiarly cultural industry jibe with progressive thought in America today? Isn't it getting time that Hollywood should make more

studious attempts to elevate and cultivate the thinking of the people in this country as well as the entertainment of the people in this country?

I must confess—it is not a confession, it is an expression of great delight—that many fine pictures are made. When I say “many” I do not mean hundreds, but I do mean dozens of very good pictures, very intelligent and entertaining pictures, are made every year. I am certainly not belittling the very fine films that we see, but I do not think that the quality, the general quality of films today is at all what it should be. I know that improvement in this line would probably lead to different methods of distribution, would probably mean that pictures would not be made for every theatre in the country but for certain theatres, might very well mean somebody would have to take losses for a time on some films. But it would certainly be for the public good if this endeavor were made. I think it would be for the eventual interest of the industry itself.

I certainly do not advocate any sort of government supervision. Far from it. But I do feel that the time has come for a lot of people in Hollywood to spend less of their time in thinking of the money, large sums of money, but in taking more satisfaction out of their work.

A friend of mine recently observed that there is nothing wrong with Hollywood that a little less money would not cure. I heartily agree.

An Important New Book

Hollywood — The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers. By Leo C. Rosten. Harcourt, Brace and Company. Price, \$4.00.

SOMEWHERE in the far future there may be an approximation of perspective on what the motion picture has done to mankind, and how it has done it. Even then it will probably be as hard to isolate the screen from other potent influences as it is now, when people try so hopefully and earnestly to believe they can halt the whole intricate procession of what they consider harmful in life by hanging on to the movies' tail

and digging in their heels. But then, whatever their difficulties, they will be needing such a book as this one, just as we need it now, as part of what any real understanding of the matter has to be based on.

Mr. Rosten has the good fortune to have had the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation back of him financially, and therefore independence, plenty of time, and a large staff of assistants—an impressive group of people expert at collecting such data as he wanted. He also has the good fortune of being a good mixer, and therefore of being able to get close to his subject in invaluable proximities. And he is a clever writer.

He has avoided the forbidding taint of an avowed “sociological study” by aiming his first volume at the most vivid interest that the movies arouse: the fan interest, which lurks—acknowledged or not—in all of us. This is part of his cleverness, and also very sound. As he says: “Hollywood is an index of our society and our culture. . . . The aberrations of our culture are more vivid, more conspicuous, and more dramatic in Hollywood than in New Bedford or Palo Alto. Our values are extended to the strident and the unmistakable in Hollywood's way of life. . . . A study of Hollywood casts the profile of American society into sharper relief.”

Quite obviously, when you come to think of it, one of the basic things about movies is the people who make them. Of the many millions of words written about the movies—and they are not forced on readers: readers eat them up—several millions are about the personalities of Hollywood, not about the pictures. A large percentage of them are silly or trivial or preposterous or downright misinformation, but they are an evidence of the most vital connection between the movies and their public: the people—exploited or behind the scenes—who make the movies. These people are the most paraded equivalent of American royalty, the demi-gods of our national fantasies. And our movies can be no better and no worse than the capabilities and natures of these people.

In this volume Mr. Rosten has made an extensive study and analysis of these spot-

lighted folk, good-humored, clear-eyed and well proportioned. He gets them into a perspective in relation to other American groups who have been rich, or extravagant, or wildly publicized. He trims down the exaggerations, winnows the gossip, produces statistical tables of incomes, marriages and divorces, living expenses. Stars, directors, producers, writers, come under his observation in their public, private and political lives. He explores their psychology, their vanities and superstitions, their complexes and compulsions, their fears, their pleasures. Also, to some degree, their love-lives and dissipations, if any.

This is all much more important than such a spicy-sounding outline might imply. A good deal of what Mr. Rosten arrives at has been thought or said before, but not so comprehensively, with such good balance, or so readably. Some of it is so entertaining that at first glance it might seem superficial, but there is a solid basis and scheme of presentation beneath it.

Mr. Rosten has left a tougher task to a later volume: the economics of picture making and distribution, the labor problems, and the influences of codes and pressure groups and censorship bodies; the rigidities, obvious or intangible, within which the Hollywood people have to work. This will be equally important, and one hates to have to wait for it. But meanwhile, either now or a hundred years hence, anyone who wants to understand present-day American movies will need to read this first volume. *J.S.H.*

The Annual Conference

THE Board's Eighteenth Annual Conference opened at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York on Thursday, November 13th, with a meeting of the delegates presided over by Lester F. Scott, National Executive of the Campfire Girls. This session was particularly arranged in celebration of twenty-five years of activity of the community groups which are associated in the Board's National Motion Picture Council. Mrs. Howard S. Gans, Honorary President of the Child Study Association, and Mrs. Miriam Sutro Price, of the Public Education

Association, told of the first efforts to establish country-wide groups carrying on the Board's work outside New York, the purposes for which it was begun and how it has progressed. In brief but vivid talks, representatives of eighteen different local organizations told of their community work.

Thursday afternoon's session began the various talks on "Movies in a Democracy" under the chairmanship of Henry Hart. John Grierson, Commissioner of the National Film Board of Canada, reported expertly on "Cooperation of the Film Industry with the Government under War Conditions." Mrs. Rustin McIntosh, Head-mistress of the Brearley School in New York City, spoke on the influence of motion pictures on young people, especially girls. Lars Moën, supplemented Mrs. McIntosh's plea for a more specialized product for young movie-goers with a colorful account of the "Children's Movie Studio in Moscow." Finally Julien Bryan, speaking on "Understanding Latin America Through the Movies," showed some of the excellent films he has made of Latin American life, which was a spirited climax to the afternoon.

On Thursday evening the delegates attended Professor Thrasher's course at New York University, and heard Louis Nizer, Executive Secretary of the N. Y. Film Board of Trade, explain "Trade Practices in the Motion Picture Industry."

Friday afternoon, under the chairmanship of Dr. Russell Potter, Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times* spoke on "Hollywood as an Expression of America." Elizabeth Hawes, of *PM*, discussed movie fashions and whether or not Hollywood could be called a world fashion center. Garson Kanin, fresh from his advancement from a sergeant in the Signal Corps to an adviser in Washington's Office of Emergency Management, applied his knowledge of Hollywood production to its relation to defense efforts. Finally Robert Flaherty gave a special showing of his beautiful new film, *The Land*.

The evening was given to a program of films that have been made for military instruction, with Col. M. E. Gillette, in charge of the Training Film Laboratory at Fort Monmouth, introducing them.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellence and defects.

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Swamp Water

Screen play by Dudley Nichols from the story by Vereen Bell, directed by Jean Renoir, photographed by Peverell Marley, A.S.C., music by David Buttolph. Produced by Irving Pichel for 20th Century-Fox, distributed by 20th Century-Fox.

Cast

Tom Keefer	Walter Brennan
Thursday Ragan	Walter Huston
Julie	Anne Baxter
Ben	Dana Andrews
Mabel McKenzie	Virginia Gilmore
Jesse Wick	John Carradine
Hannah	Mary Howard
Sheriff Jeb McKane	Eugene Pallette
Tim Dorson	Ward Bond
Bud Dorson	Guinn Williams
Marty McCord	Russell Simpson
Hardy Ragan	Joseph Sawyer
Tulle McKensie	Paul Burns
Barber	Dave Morris
Fred Ulm	Frank Austin
Miles Tonkin	Matt Willis

THE story of *Swamp Water* is simple and no great shakes really as far as plot goes. A man convicted of murder in the rural community has escaped into the great Okefenokee swamp in southern Georgia and two deputies who have gone in pursuit of him are drowned. A searching party finds their overturned canoe and returns from the forbidding wilderness, but one of the men loses a favorite hound on the expedition and next day, against the violent opposition of his father, he returns to the swamp to find it. There he is captured and held prisoner by the hunted man. When, however, he tries to save the convict's life the young prisoner is given his liberty to return home and he and his former captor strike up a partnership to trap for furs in the swamp. Through simplicity the young hunter one day lets slip that he has a partner

in Okefenokee and the townsfolk try to make him lead a posse to him. But the lad refuses and is ostracized until by accident he stumbles on evidence that proves the fugitive innocent and traps the real criminals. Ordinary enough, contrived, synthetic.

The film however does much more than merely tell the bald story. It creates out of the banal material a canvas of gorgeous color and gripping apprehension. And in this presentation the picture takes on distinction. The camera, the only legitimate narrator the screen really has of its own and proper right, rises to a rare eloquence under M. Renoir's direction. There is a minimum of talk and a maximum of cinematic exposition. This thanks in great part to the very talented and movie-wise Dudley Nichols who prepared the screen play. The feeling of enmity between the swamp and the people who live on its verges and fear its bogs and reptiles and its unknown menace is achieved by sight and sound rather than by literary or theatrical devices. These means chiefly impart the terror and fascination of the wild and forbidding places that offer hospitality only to the outcast who through fear of his life at the hands of his kind has mastered the brutality of nature and made it minister to his needs.

Beautiful and deadly, festooned with Spanish moss and lush with fantastic growth, slithery with cottonmouth snakes and alligators, beset with quagmires and certain slimy death for the uninitiated, the mighty swamp itself is the true antagonist of the film. Its presence never once can be forgotten, even in the love scenes and the yokel humor in the general store. By what you



Walter Brennan and Dana Andrews in "Swamp Water."

see and what you hear and what you observe in the reactions of the men and women who live near it, you never escape the Swamp's domination of the mood and drama of the film. In its pervading presence it unifies all the action, all the thought in the picture, in its opposition to man it projects the spine-tingling drama of the film. Its conquest is possible only to the man who fears death more than itself. Whether the people of the picture are interpreted by the over-fine civilized art of a European or not is beside the point. M. Renoir has created a film with elemental power in every foot of its length and has cast with remarkable clarity and economy against the appalling majesty and brutality of the swamp a tale of primitive villainy and virtue, instinct with a sense of the harshness and the tenderness of uncouth men and the unending drama of good against evil, both in the realm of morals and in the realm of nature.

A. B.

Target for Tonight

Original screen story by Harry Watt and B. Cooper, directed by Harry Watt, acted by officers and men of the Royal Air Force. British production distributed in this country by Warner Brothers.

BRITISH documentary films have only begun to reach this country in quantity since the war began, so that it may not be everyone who will realize what this film means in terms of progress. It is considerably more than ten years now since Scotch John Grierson invented the dour term "documentary film" and it is ten years at least since he set his young journalist film-makers to dramatize English industry and public service in terms the ordinary citizen could understand. Like other young men before them, these British boys leaned heavily on camera angles and aesthetics at first, then reacted to the other extreme by emphasizing prosy statistics. They have come out of both phases now, and this film, following on *They Also Serve* and *Letter From Home*, shows

their technique in fullest flower. All that was awkward and difficult in their earlier use of natural backgrounds and real people enacting their own lives is now as smooth and graceful as a fiction film and infinitely more convincing. This is partly the painful maturation of an art, but it is also due, to put it briefly, to the war. To science and sincerity, the British have added passion. For reasons which we all know.

Target For Tonight tells the story of an RAF raid on Germany. The objective is plotted, the fliers are summoned, the raid explained, the pilots make ready to go. The barrack room sounds with accents from all over the British Empire, and some from America too. The fliers are young and there are horseplay and the kind of bad jokes which go with comradeship—but all of them, as they get into their heavy harness, are waiting to take off. In their quarters the senior officers are more serious, intent on maps and phones and weather reports—but they too are waiting. When it comes, when the planes rise, the moment itself seems all taken up with mechanics and seeing that everything goes according to plan, and then suddenly the planes are in the waste of cloud and air, each one alone, plunging forward by chart and compass, not by sight, and the journey is so long that there is loss of time-sense and mounting tension. The objective is abruptly upon them in a hellish and beautiful burst of anti-aircraft fire, the bombs are dropped, the oil tanks below go up in catastrophic flame, the planes turn back—but one is hit, the radio operator wounded. The hurt plane lags behind. Back at the hangar they wait and wait, the senior officers go out on the foggy field to listen for the sound of “F Freddy,” the one plane that has not returned. It comes, finally, joyously, the ship is safely set down. And that concludes the operation, gentlemen, I will send in my report tomorrow, good night.

Target for Tonight may not mean much in film history: it is just the best of British documentary so far and will shortly be surpassed. But in human history it is a film for the hour. As propaganda it is on the tick of time, a perfect development from *London Can Take It* at this moment when

passive resistance to the Axis everywhere gives place to offensive action. And it is democratic propaganda, because it celebrates courage, not hate. And moving propaganda, because it is a link between the many and the few.

These human things in it will be more important to you than anything else when you see it, but the film-making is surpassingly fine. It has St. Exupéry's power to bring the lonely experience of flying near (interesting that these factual documentaries usually touch poetry too—Grierson always said that they would). Perhaps you will be a bit annoyed at the obvious faking of part of the bombing sequence; a documentary as good as this doesn't need spectacular explosions to give it “production value.” Perhaps, too, Americans will be put off a little by the very British reticence and “underplaying” of some of the fliers and their officers. But it is well to remember that there are times and circumstances when a stiff upper lip is the only way you can keep things under control:

*Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose,
But young men think it is, and we were young.*

RICHARD GRIFFITH

The Land

Directed and narrated by Robert J. Flaherty, commentary written by Russell Lord, musical composition by Richard Arnell. Produced by the Agricultural Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

PARE LORENTZ called Robert J. Flaherty “a wandering poet,” and it is a simpler and more beautiful description than any of the encomiums the critics have thought up. There is the grace of poetry on everything he has done from *Nanook* to *Elephant Boy*, and of all the screen's masterpieces these films are freshest and most alive when seen today. He has been a wanderer in time as well as in space, for the societies and customs he has filmed were one and all left over from the world's primeval past. But now the fascinating arc of his camera's voyage of discovery has swung full circle and Flaherty brings us a film of his own country—the United States.

More specifically it is about the land on which that country is built, and which has seemed in the past decade to be falling away beneath us. For *The Land* is that new kind of documentary which other men have built on the Flaherty form, which does not merely lyrically celebrate a way of life but marshals facts about it, raises issues, dramatizes arguments pro and con. Like *The River*, the new picture is a sort of government report on the state of the union—but how much more dramatic, how much closer to us, than any written report can ever be!

It is beginning to seem, in fact, that documentary is the new democratic art of our time, a propagandist art, perhaps, but backing up its persuasion by argument and statistics and the consciences of its enthusiastic makers.

It will seem a pity to some that Flaherty, in dropping his old form and adopting the new, should have to begin on material which previous films have made familiar. Lorentz's pioneering *Plow That Broke The Plains*, and his masterpiece, *The River*, have told us before what wind and rain and wasteful greed have done to the soil of our country. *The Grapes of Wrath* has dramatized with heartbreaking power the tragic fate of the thousands of farmers dispossessed by erosion and forced into the serfdom of day labor on the great fruit and vegetable farms of California. A hundred films (it seems) have shown man sacrificed to the juggernaut of the machine. So the movies have made words like erosion, sharecropping, and technological unemployment come to life for us before. Now Flaherty does the same job over again, and he has to treat all three subjects at once, so that the film falls abruptly into three parts, with a brief, unemphatic coda which tries, not very successfully, to show what the government is doing to check erosion, stabilize farm prices, and put the farmer himself back on the land he owns.

In short, the picture lacks that wholeness and gradual building toward a climax which have hitherto contributed to the pleasure of seeing a Flaherty film. This is a fractured film, its skeleton is awry, the bones stick out through the skin. But I think Flaherty meant it that way. Edith Sitwell in her

poems, Stravinsky in his music, deliberately adopted a jagged, staccato form to express the confusion and distress of their vision of the modern world. And Flaherty, travelling through his own country for the first time in many years, forsakes the graceful smoothness of his "primitive" films for a form which suggests the horror of his broken journey. "Here we saw this," he says, and passes on, but not indifferently. If ever there was a personal film, this is it. It is a cry, a groan; it has for me the terrible simplicity of the Book of Common Prayer, or of the Book of Job, which Flaherty quotes in the commentary. "If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." The images are equally as beautiful and near and part of common experience. Flaherty's relentless camera, Helen Van Dongen's editing (her part in the film is a great and important one) make a machine cutting corn into *The Machine*, cutting lives. And we see those lives, cast off, broken down by the roadside, in the eyes which one starving woman turns into the camera. There is a dulled animal curiosity in those eyes, and some pain because she is squinting against the sun, but hardly anything human any more.

A man who brings his camera to such sights emerges not the same. It is hardly strange that the film is little more than a cry of pain, that Flaherty cannot tell us what to do to help, can only shout at us at the end of the film to do *something*. To many people the tragic beauty of *The Land* will not be sufficient to compensate for the fact that it provides no blueprint. But I have been thinking for a long time that films should pose the problem and leave it in the lap of the audience, for it is we who must answer for our lives, not our teachers nor our artists. And I say now that this film is important and perhaps great because it means that Flaherty in the fullness of his years has come back into the modern world, to work alongside the rest of us. All his films and his film-making have been a timeless escape from the terrible vision he thrusts at us here. But for him who is joined to all the living, there is hope.

RICHARD GRIFFITH

Critical Comment

Personal Triumphs

THE moral aspects of *Two Faced Woman* have been discussed widely and sufficiently; no time need be lost here in reiterating them or in refuting them either. Frankly the film is broad burlesque, we wish we could say biting satire, built on a synthetic and extravagant plot: a good outdoor girl tries to win back her philandering husband by posing as her glamorous, worldly, newly fabricated twin sister to sicken him with sophisticated and meretricious women and send him back to her proper skiing self. The film unfortunately does not live up to its bright promise. Several considerable stretches are a good deal less than brilliant, and these include a slowish opening and a ski chase finale evidently tacked on to whoop up the ending.

A theme so delicately poised between the silly and salacious, and so old hat besides, demands brilliant execution in all departments—direction, acting, writing and cutting. In none except acting does such execution materialize on the screen and that overwhelmingly in the exquisite, tongue-in-cheek performance of Greta Garbo. The rest of the small gilt-edged cast has very little to do. Melvyn Douglas, who by this time must have been through more movie boudoirs than any actor in Hollywood, turns in a routine job of stooge-lover. Constance Bennett, now turned character actress, we presume, is amusing in a small stock part. And Ruth Gordon and Roland Young bring their considerable talent to bit roles that are bit roles. That's the cast, practically. The whole of the film from start to finish rests on Garbo's shoulders.

Luckily for the film they are very capable shoulders. If it were not for her the picture would be considerably less than trivial and somewhat more than vulgar. The elan and nuance she brings to her characterization compel consideration of the film if only to lament the waste of her art on so negligible a script. The Garbo way with words and the Garbo mastery of posture and movement, whether it is comic as in this case, or tragic,

as we have seen in the past, are enthralling enough in themselves no matter what the vehicle. She gives a sparkling exhibition of her powers in *Two Faced Woman*. In the nightclub scene where she meets her husband for the first time in her guise of international charmer and convinces him she is not his wife but his wife's younger sister (younger by fifteen minutes), and where she completely defeats the poised and catty lady playwright he is squiring around, demonstrates the astonishing delicacy and humorous shading she imparts to speech. The rendezvous sequence, as bright a burlesque as we've had since Lynn Fontaine played in *The Guardsman*, exploits her genius for comic attitudes and gestures, if "comic" is not too gross a word for this bravura performance. The essential silliness of the sultry *femme fatale* from Theda Bara down is summed up and defined once and for all with devastating caricature.

There are other places too that afford plenty of fun. The parts mentioned are merely the most developed. But after all a good movie does not consist in scattered islands of brightness in a dull dark sea, especially when the bright spots grow out of the art and personality of one person.

BY a curious two-way exchange the Russians have taken a lesson or two from Hollywood in making *Wings of Victory*, but at the same time have presented a portrait of a man from which Hollywood might well take a cue. The film, instead of revelling in the mass like other epics from Russia, depicts one Soviet air-hero, Valeri Chklov — possibly a little romantically for film purposes but not too much so. Beginning with his student days as a devil-may-care army flier, it shows his dismissal from the army, his dissatisfaction with more mundane occupations, his bravura as a test-pilot guiding new models on their maiden flights, and his eventual acquisition of world-fame as the leader of an expedition over the Pole to the United States. Oddly enough, Chklov's subsequent death in line of duty is not included — a thing which our script-writers

(Continued on page 17)

JUNIOR INTERESTS

The Junior Ten Best of 1941

THE 4-Star Clubs and the Young Reviewers have selected the following films as their ten best films for 1941.

1. Sergeant York
2. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
3. Blossoms in the Dust
4. How Green Was My Valley
5. A Yank in the R.A.F.
6. The Little Foxes
7. Dumbo
8. Dive Bomber
9. Citizen Kane
10. Meet John Doe

The above list represents the annual balloting of all of the Board's 4-Star Club members, located throughout the country, as well as of the Young Reviewers, a New York branch of the Board. The voters range in age from 8 to 18 and their selections cover the period Dec. 1st, 1940, to Dec. 1st, 1941. The poll is made before any other list of 10-Best appears in order that the voters will not be influenced by any other critics. It must be said that the list is an array of good films which indicates considerable thought and discrimination. It proves once again that younger audiences have tastes and standards which closely parallel those of their parents. Age seems to make but little difference among film-goers.

The films were picked for their entertainment qualities but one notes the lack of comedies, save for *Dumbo*. The other nine pictures employed an almost documentary approach to a serious subject, being in part biographies, travelogues, technical descriptions or rather probing moral conflicts. This serious purpose in the pictures was appreciated by the voters. Incidentally, *Sergeant York* won top honors by a wide margin, having been put in first place on 80% of the ballots. Six of the above pictures were referred to the Exceptional Photoplays Committee by the adult Review Committee for their artistic merit. The Review Committee, however, did not even recommend the two

Abbott and Costello comedies mentioned on the list below of the choices of boys, 14-18. The difference in taste is easily explained and in no way reflects upon the boys voting.

There is one point, however, upon which the Review Committee seriously disagrees with the 4-Star Clubs and Young Reviewers. Three of the pictures, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Little Foxes*, and *Citizen Kane*, were recommended by them for mature audiences only as it was felt the pictures were too talky and solemn to be enjoyed by people under 18. It is in no sense a protective measure, done with the aim of keeping younger minds from anything questionable or problematic. The Review Committee simply thought younger people wouldn't like these pictures but they were apparently wrong. Now, the Board would like to know why. It is a serious issue with the National Board and its work, and we would greatly appreciate clearing up the misunderstanding on tastes. Reviews and criticisms of these three pictures with reasons for their selection on the 10-Best lists are wanted from 4-Star Clubs. May we hear from you?

The following break-down of the vote into age and sex groups will interest those who enjoy comparing tastes:

BOYS (8-13)

Sergeant York
Dumbo
Dive Bomber
A Yank in the R.A.F.
Blossoms in the Dust
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
How Green Was My Valley
Fantasia
The Little Foxes
Citizen Kane

BOYS (14-18)

Sergeant York
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
A Yank in the R.A.F.
Dive Bomber
How Green Was My Valley
Citizen Kane
Hold That Ghost
Shepherd of the Hills
Meet John Doe
In the Navy

GIRLS (8-13)

Sergeant York
Dumbo
The Little Foxes
Blossoms in the Dust
A Yank in the R.A.F.
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
How Green Was My Valley
Citizen Kane
Fantasia
The Reluctant Dragon

GIRLS (14-18)

Sergeant York
Blossoms in the Dust
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
How Green Was My Valley
The Little Foxes
A Yank in the R.A.F.
Blood and Sand
Shepherd of the Hills
Charley's Aunt
Dive Bomber

The winners of the "Ten-Best" contest are:

First Place—Albert Bauer

Second Place—James Osborn and Ethelind Singervæet.

Third Place—Barbara Burris, Louise Kaye, Natalie Raymond, Margaret Roethel, Lenore Schwartz, Lila Simon and E. Strauss.

As announced in the October issue, the winners of the contest are those members whose own lists come closest to the "Ten-Best" appearing above. They will receive as prizes properties used in the making of the winning films.

The Young Reviewers on:

"HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY"

THE following is a slightly edited discussion of *How Green Was My Valley* by four Young Reviewers. Rose, Joyce and Richard are 13 years old while Kenneth is 12.

JOYCE: Wonderful

KENNETH: Very unusual but also excellent.

ROSE: It gave a beautiful example of what life is with these hard-working Welsh coal-miners, showing the hardships they endure.

JOYCE: I thought it was wonderful. I still have a lump in my throat. But besides all the sadness, they had a few parts that brightened up the picture — they were very good and it didn't make the picture too dull that way.

ROSE: I think it will appeal to the average movie-goer because it's about life that we're not used to see.

KENNETH: It was instructive, too. I think they could have put in more detail, even though it was quite long. The pictures in the mine were very good photography and, though they weren't made for that, were very instructive.

RICHARD: It was excellent and was very well directed. There were at least 15 mob scenes and a director has to be unusually fine to have one of them after another and have them come out with such goodness. When I saw John Ford's name, I was looking for something wonderful and I imagine I got it.

ROSE: The acting was excellent. I didn't know many of the leads, but they have done it very competently.

RICHARD: I didn't know that Donald Crisp could take a lead part. He acted best.

JOYCE: I didn't particularly care for Maureen O'Hara. She's very sweet but nothing out of the ordinary.

ROSE: I enjoyed her. She acted shyness well.

KENNETH: I didn't take particular notice of her acting but I didn't notice anything especially. When acting is bad, it stands out.

JOYCE: Her acting wasn't bad, but it didn't appeal to me.

RICHARD: What, of course, should naturally appeal to me and to other boys and girls was the boy, Huw. I imagine he's a teen-age boy and I felt not exactly myself in his position—but—well, sympathy for him. I know how he felt, helping his family by going to the coal mines—and the expression on his face! I have never seen anything like it before.

ROSE: I was most impressed by his determination and courage when he was being bullied by teacher and pupils and later when he was belittled by the boys in the mine.

JOYCE: For a boy who hasn't made much of a name, he did an exceptional piece of work. That was a long picture and the story seemed to center around him. A boy to do a piece of acting like that was wonderful. It will be enjoyed by those people who enjoy sad pictures. I am one of that group and I certainly enjoyed it.

RICHARD: I believe older people would enjoy it more than we would. I didn't understand some of it and I don't think others our age will.

ROSE: I think the younger children wouldn't enjoy it. They enjoy a picture ending happily and some grown-ups would like that kind, too. But this picture had a classical background. I am not saying I understand it all but it appealed to me because of the life so different from that of the average person.

JOYCE: I don't know whether I am right or

not, but it seemed to me it was sort of divided—it wasn't joined together. There was her marriage and Huw's going to school and other parts, but they weren't well connected.

ROSE: I noticed that. It seemed there were a lot of sequences happening, each one a story in itself and each a new story because, as Joyce said, it seemed to be a lot of separate memories and not a connected story.

KENNETH: It wasn't a picture with a normal type of plot. It had a general plot but not a detailed one. The idea was to give it this broken interest.

RICHARD: Wasn't it around Huw? In the beginning, he said, "I will never leave you," and he was the very last thing mentioned — the last thing seen and heard.

KENNETH: Did you see *Citizen Kane*? It had a plot like this—a looking back on his life.

ROSE: It gives a certain effectiveness.

RICHARD: I have hardly ever seen a title more appropriate—*How Green Was My Valley*.

The Junior Conference

The Junior Session of the Board's annual Conference, Mrs. T. Merrill Prentice presiding, was well attended by 4-Star Clubs and Young Reviewers as well as representatives of adult film councils over the country. The following reports were made which might furnish suggestions for activities on the part of other 4-Star Clubs:

The Young Reviewers—a presentation of a radio script on film criticism which they had previously broadcast over station WABC.

White Plains High School—a report on their club's cooperating with the local chapter of the Red Cross in projecting defense films for various local organizations.

Brooklyn Public School No. 217—a discussion objecting to the lack of films exclusively designed for children but praising our freedom of the screen and of the use of knowledge as contrasted with the lack of freedom in other countries.

Manhasset High School—a report of a recent production showing the schools preparing for defense. Equipment—16mm Victor camera with 2 lenses using a recorded speech for the accompanying sound. The film cost about \$50.00 which was paid by their Board of Education and was shown in the local theatre as a 12 minute short. The school has a useful tip to pass on to other schools—if you want to get the funds for a large project, use a short outdoors film as your argument. It will convince the Board of Education of the worth of funds for such a purpose far better than verbal argument.

Hunter High School, New York City—a clever quiz program to test the average movie-goer's knowledge of all phases of the motion picture.

Mark Twain Junior High School, Brooklyn—a discussion of the manners of movie-goers in the theatre. Adults and children alike have vices which should be corrected in order that the entire audience may enjoy the features and this challenge is being accepted by the club as a campaign for better manners.

After the formal reports came an open discussion of current films which proved very lively. *Sergeant York* was praised for its discussion of attitudes toward war and for the unusually good trailers which preceded it. *A Yank in the R.A.F.* was enjoyed for its documentation of the battle at Dunkirk though the stars and the highlighting of Miss Grable's legs received unfavorable comment. *Dive Bomber* was liked and recommended for younger audiences especially who would appreciate its wealth of information regarding the medical branch of aviation. At this point, praise was offered the general tone of films dealing with the European situation because they make audiences conscious of the importance of the times and of the issues at stake. It was admitted, however, that there can be both good and bad propaganda and that some distasteful significance had been injected into a few films simply to draw people to the box-office. A few of the recent comedies were criticized

for presenting a distorted picture of camp life.

Turning to comedies, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* was lauded for its originality and for its beautifully comic treatment of a thought-provoking theme. *Lady Be Good* was chiefly remembered for Miss Sothorn's singing of "The Last Time I Saw Paris." The difficulty of getting a good plot for a musical was regretted. The delegates appreciated the chance given Deanna Durbin in *It Started with Eve* to change her character but hoped she was not giving up singing. *The Bride Came C.O.D.* was only credited with giving Bette Davis a change of role which should lend new life to her more serious characterizations when she returns to them.

(Continued from page 13)

would have poured their souls into with massed choric eulogizing and the glistening of clouds. Does the plot sound familiar? It would seem that the test-pilot hero has been tried by nearly every reputable actor in Hollywood at one time or another and done into the ground.

But the Russians attack their portraiture in a different way. Possibly the filmic Chklov is a matinee-idol to shop-girls in the Steppes, but to us he seems much more like a man, violent and full-blooded, homely but heroic in proportions, rude and impetuous but always surging toward his ultimate destiny with the savage intensity of a man born to action. He is a titan but one we can believe in. No effort was made to turn him into a wise-crack-king or a parlor-athlete as well; he's just a great flier. And without these superfluous trappings, which our heroes seem to possess such a store of, there emerges a genuinely heroic figure of a man—a test-pilot who really wanted his wings and one who would really die with his boots on.

To be sure, one must pardon technical imperfections, occasional lapses of structure and a certain amount of preachment. If one wishes, one may also overlook the quite glowing and moving prose about joy-of-work-with-the-masses which is put into the mouth of a most beatific Stalin. But you

still have a constantly interesting and often violently arresting portrait of a hero.

CORRECTION—In the article "What the Movies Do for Books" in the November issue, an error on page 6 made it appear that 6% of story-source material is original. It should have been 65%, as against 35% for published material.

Selected Pictures Guide

(Continued from page 2)

A war melodrama involving an international news syndicate and the intended invasion of England in 1940 with romance and pathos nicely interspersed. The usual brash American carries on at high pressure in embattled London and attempts to get out word of the forthcoming invasion while carrying on a high pressure love affair with a girl in the Bureau of Information. He is piqued when the censors won't let him report on the invasion but finally sees the light when little Roddy dies in the performance of his duty. Suspense, fine photography, good acting generally and a swift pace give the film an energy that is commendable in spite of the absurd picture of a Yank abroad. Aimed at tears and cheers the film just misses getting the amount aimed at, but it has plenty of entertainment. 20th Century-Fox.

f DATE WITH THE FALCON, A—George Sanders, Wendy Barrie, James Gleason. Based on the character created by Michael Arlen. Directed by Irving Reis. The second adventure of the Falcon to arrive on the screen and not altogether an over-brilliant one. Mr. Sanders is his old charming self, accent, allure for ladies and all, and he plays with his usual polish and, we might add, relish, the elegant sleuth whose marriage meets constant postponement because crimes are cropping up for him to solve. This time he breaks a ring which has kidnapped the inventor of synthetic diamonds to use his formula for nefarious practices. But it won't do if the scripters don't tighten up their next little fable somewhat more than they have this one. RKO Radio.

m DESIGN FOR SCANDAL—Rosalind Russell, Walter Pidgeon. Original screen story by Lionel Houser. Directed by Norman Taurog. Here is certainly one of the unwieldy stories of all time, but it is acted by competent stars and turned out with considerable polish so the square wheel of the plot doesn't stick out. A tycoon, piqued at a judge for the stiff alimony he is forced to pay an ex-wife, hires a man to get the judge removed through a scandal. It so happens that the judge is a woman, in fact Miss Russell, so Mr. Pidgeon has a change of

heart midway through his cooked-up scandal and really falls in love with said judge. It is very smart and at times very funny. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

- f **DEVIL PAYS OFF, THE**—J. Edward Bromberg, Osa Massen, William Wright. Original screen story by George Worthing Yates and Julian Zimet. Directed by John H. Auer. Comedy and melodrama balance evenly in this rather improbable story of interferences with the shipping life-line to Europe in the present situation. Bromberg has sold a line of boats to the U. S. but then has made arrangements with a foreign power to have them intercepted. The story is nicely acted and the direction has individuality. Dramatic lighting has often been substituted for unnecessary detail in background and proves very effective. The U. S. investigator's troubles, as to the spies and two ladies, keep things humming quite satisfactorily. Republic.
- f **GO WEST YOUNG LADY**—Penny Singleton, Glenn Ford. Original screen story by Karen De Wolf. Directed by Frank R. Strayer. A very amusing spoofing of the old West, scenario replete with Indian runaways and bandits. The cast does a fine job, and the director keeps the story running at a fairly lively pace. The song and dance routines are quite smart. Col.
- f **HANNA I SOCIETEN** (Hanna in Society)—Rut Holm, Dagmar Ebbesen. Original screen story by Sten Tarbeau. Directed by Gunnar Olsson. Miss Holm is a good comedienne with a lovely laugh, an awkward bearing and many undoubtedly funny lines to speak in this film. The story places her as a servant who inherits her employer's fortune and is then heckled by the deceased's relatives who try to prove that poor Hanna is insane and incapable of handling the money. (Swedish dialogue with English sub-titles) Scandia.
- f **INTERNATIONAL SQUADRON** — Ronald Reagan, James Stephenson, Olympe Bradna. Suggested by a play by Frank Wead. Directed by Lewis Seiler. A story of the R. A. F. squadron composed of fliers from many countries. One of them is a brash young American—a brilliant aviator, but more interested in affairs of the heart than of war. This failing results in a tragedy for which he atones in a stirring climax. The story serves as a good framework for showing how the R. A. F. operates and for some remarkably vivid and exciting scenes of air battles. Warner.
- f **KATHLEEN** — Shirley Temple, Herbert Marshall. Based on a story by Kay Van Riper. Directed by Harold S. Bucquet. 'Tis sad but Miss Temple returns to us as the neglected little rich girl whose mother died when she was a baby and whose father spends his time making money and doing the hot spots with lush Gail Patrick. When a crisis in the house forces father to fire Shirley's unpleasant governess, replacing her with Laraine Day, the little girl dreams up a romance between him and nurse. Aging has not staled Miss Temple's charm nor her dimple and she's the film's best asset. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f **KEEP 'EM FLYING**—Abbott & Costello, Martha Raye. Original screen story by Edmund L. Hartmann. Directed by Arthur Lubin. Obviously, this is Abbott and Costello in the air, or more specifically at a pilot-training center. They also appear in the concession area of a traveling fair and needless to say the tunnel-of-love, etc., offer splendid props for their brand of humor. There are also the customary interruptions of musical numbers and a sub-plot involving the juvenile romantic interests. The two comics are still the major element of the film and they keep up in fine style. Their pantomime is a joy to see. Universal.
- f **LOUISIANA PURCHASE**—Bob Hope, Vera Zorina, Victor Moore. Based on the play by Morrie Ryskind. Music by Irving Berlin. Directed by Irving Cummings. Taken over bodily from the stage this fine comedy has been made into a sumptuous and delightful show. True it's more a photographed stage play than a movie but it offers excellent eye-delighting material for the color camera which has a field day with fashion shows, Mardi Gras parades, and marvelous theatrical sets. The color is remarkably good. The story tells of the invasion of a New England senator into New Orleans to investigate the books of the Louisiana Purchasing Co., an outfit run by the political leaders of the town. The action consists in getting something on the senator to make him forget the whole matter. Victor Moore as the Yankee senator is marvelously funny, and he has excellent help in Bob Hope and the beauteous Miss Zorina to put across this highly diverting show with its catchy music and its swarms of pretty girls. Para.
- f **MEN IN HER LIFE, THE**—Loretta Young, Conrad Veidt, Dean Jagger. Based on the novel "Ballerina" by Lady Eleanor Smith. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. Miss Young worked very hard to make this unusual account of the three loves in a ballerina's life a success and the film's faults are not hers. It is laid in the 1860s and many interesting scenes of a dancer's rehearsals and performances are either dubbed in or done by Miss Young herself. Her first husband was her dance instructor, an older man, while the second was an American who was tragically out of sympathy with her career. Sandwiched between, was a lover who was killed. The three men and the script are woefully flat but Miss Young's problems should be of interest to ladies. Columbia.

- f **OBLIGING YOUNG LADY**—Joan Carroll, Edmond O'Brien, Ruth Warrick. Based on a story by Arthur T. Horman. Directed by Richard Wallace. The trifling story for this comedy just serves as a means of introducing Joan Carroll, a cute youngster with ability. For the plot, she is the fought-over daughter of two wealthy parents who are about to separate. Until her custody is settled, she is placed in the hands of a young stenographer and packed off to the country. While there, she finds a man for the stenographer and, after many complications, re-unites her own parents. Some of the gags are prolonged but are novel so help the little girl in carrying the picture. RKO Radio.
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- f **PLAYMATES**—Kay Kyser, John Barrymore, Lupe Velez. Original screen story by James V. Kern. Directed by David Butler. Kyser and Barrymore overplay themselves in this one, which results in a violent burlesque. In spite of its rudeness with the people involved, it is very funny indeed. It seems that Kyser's and Barrymore's publicity men hit on the scheme of teaming them in a Shakespearian festival as a gag for getting their names on the front page. Neither of them approve of the idea and resort to the foulest means for holding off the festival, but it does take place in a rough sort of way. We are familiar with Barrymore in this mood—it is always funny—but Kyser is something new in the way he doesn't act but plays himself. It's corking fun, even the musical numbers being introduced with unusual originality. RKO Radio.
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- f **RISE AND SHINE**—Jack Oakie, George Murphy, Linda Darnell, Walter Brennan. Based on the book, "My Life and Hard Times" by James Thurber. Directed by Allen Dwan. This is a tale of a football college that ne'er was seen on land or sea or even in the movies to date. Jack Oakie plays the role of the greatest grid star of all time with an enormous capacity for sleep, a phobia for bursting dams and a colossal inability to retain even the simplest shred of knowledge, yet on his shoulders is placed the burden of winning all the season's games or the college folds up. Bumpy though the film is with its fantastically silly plot, it's full of good gags, the delightful personality and dance routines of George Murphy, Linda Darnell's school-girl plasticity and as fine an array of screw-balls as the movies have packed in one picture. 20th Century-Fox.
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- f **ROAD AGENT**—Dick Foran, Leo Carillo, Andy Devine. Original screen story by Sherman Lowe and Arthur St. Clare. Directed by Charles Lamont. As heroes of the lowly westerns go, Dick Foran is getting to stand very high indeed. It is his easy, likable but fighting personality that makes good for this sagebrush drama. The story is no novelty, being about one Big John who combines an appetite for sheriffs' lives with lust for the gold in the local bank. Foran becomes sheriff and, in some pretty suspenseful episodes, finally gets his man. Moreover, Foran has a very pleasing tenor voice. Universal.
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- f **SIERRA SUE**—Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette. Original screen story by Earl Felton and Julian Zimet. Directed by William Morgan. Gene is a government authority on farming in this western, the root of the evil being a devil weed which is killing off the cattle. Most of the ranch-owners co-operate in having their ranges sprayed but one land-owner is stubborn, creating the struggle for the plot. Autry's western has been very modernized here, even to using tear-gas in the gunfights at the mountain pass and using airplanes as mounts for the men in place of horses. It is a nice departure, though it doesn't whip up much excitement. Republic.
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- f **TARZAN'S SECRET TREASURE**—Johnny Weismuller, Maureen O'Sullivan. Based on characters created by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Directed by Richard Thorpe. As Tarzans go, this is a humdinger. A group of research scientists invade Mr. T's jungle home and introduce the family—Tarzan, Jane and Boy—to some of the civilized frailties like jealousy and lust for gold. Two of the scientists turn into villains at sight of the nuggets of gold little Tarzan uses in his slingshot and even turn to murder to possess the gold. But after a hair-raising melee of elephants, alligators and humans in a river, the villains are killed. The process shots are not wholly effective but are always fascinating. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
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- f **THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON**—Errol Flynn, Olivia deHavilland. Original screen story by Wally Klein and Aeneas Mackenzie. Directed by Raoul Walsh. The life of General Custer makes fine screen fare from his entrance into West Point, through his Civil War exploits, his molding of the Michigan 7th Cavalry and his final defeat with 600 men against the 6000 Indians in the Black Hills of Dakota. The film captures the action splendidly and occasional deviations from history are excusable. The film has become over-long in romanticizing the hero, presenting countless deep friendships with screen characters who are constantly giving forth with mystically prophetic statements about the general's career and his heroic doom. Flynn continues with his Robin Hood role as the man born to the saddle. His character has been aimed at presenting occasional moral lessons regarding warfare and conduct which, together with the historical reconstructions, should make the film enjoyable to younger boys especially. Warner.

INFORMATIONALS

- f ALASKA TOUR—A handsome travelogue through the southern parts of Alaska touching upon the scenery of peaks and glaciers, historic sites and the up-and-coming towns that have sprung up there. Some of the views are fine. Columbia.
- f ANNAPOLIS SALUTES THE NAVY (Variety Views)—The historical landmarks as well as the Naval Academy itself are covered in this short. Universal.
- f AT THE STROKE OF TWELVE—A short gangster film about a thug who is accused and convicted of a murder but is released on the testimony of an aged woman who has faith in his basic goodness. A nice try at a new form of short that deserves encouragement. Vita.
- m CHANGED IDENTITY—Taken from an N.B.C. radio drama, this murder with a trick ending makes a very novel short. It takes place in Kurdapur and is well acted by Patrick O'Moore. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f CRYSTAL FLYERS (Sportscope)—Beautifully photographed scenes of skiing, and excellent shots of the training which the Swedish ski patrol receives. RKO Radio.
- f FANCY ANSWERS (Pete Smith Specialty)—A quiz for the audience with all manner of ideas used in livening up the usual question-answer routine. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f GAUCHO SPORT (Sportscope)—The Argentinian cowboys do it a lot differently down there, but there is still just as much kick to watching them lasso and ride. RKO Radio.
- f GEORGETOWN, "PRIDE OF PENANG" (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—In this description of the Malayan city, the strange blending of Chinese and Mohammedan life is stressed. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f HOW WAR CAME (This Changing World)—Raymond Gram Swing reviews the collapse of the League and the early incidents of bloodshed leading to the present conflict, aided by colored cartoons. Columbia.
- f KINGS OF THE TURF—Morty, a pacer, is used as the subject of a biography in which the training of a pacer is well told. Vitaphone.
- f* LIFE OF A THOROUGHbred—A delightful study of the life of a blue-blooded horse from birth through his training and final glory on the track. The animal pictures are particularly handsome. 20th Century-Fox.
- f MARCH OF TIME NO. 4, THE (8th Series)—"Main Street, U. S. A."—This issue presents a very strong picture of what Main Street, U. S. A. would be like should Hitler's New Order gain command of our citizenry. It is not designed to leave the audience cool and collected, but it is well done for that type of thing. RKO Radio.
- f PEACEFUL QUEBEC AT WAR (Variety Views)—Quebec seems to be full of old buildings or places of historical or religious interest. Universal.
- f* PERILS OF THE JUNGLE—A travelogue of the search for a museum specimen of the okapi by Commander Attilio Gatti and a troupe of pigmies. The bridge-building sequence is especially instructive. Vitaphone.
- f PICTURE PEOPLE NO. 2—"Hollywood Sports"—Helen Broderick takes us around to ball games, tennis matches and other sports events where stars foregather when they're off the sets. RKO Radio.
- f PICTURE PEOPLE NO. 3—"Hobbies of the Stars"—Photography, drawing and other amateur interests that keep movie personalities amused, with sly remarks by Helen Broderick. RKO Radio.
- f POLO CHAMPIONS—The training of ponies and the demonstration of some very spectacular plays in polo. Columbia.
- f SCENIC GRANDEUR (Fitzpatrick Traveltalk)—There is instruction as well as beauty in this picture of one of our North American glaciers and its life. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STRANGE TESTAMENT (Passing Parade)—This is a strange tale of the way an early love affair affected the will of an actual old gentleman of New Orleans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f STRANGER THAN FICTION NO. 99—"Junior Battle Fleet"—the title refers to a fleet of battleships (models) constructed by some children. They are but one of the oddities of this short. Universal.
- f TANKS ARE COMING—A very good presentation of the training of men in the tank corps and their field tactics. Vitaphone.
- f VIVA MEXICO!—James A. Fitzpatrick takes us on a nice Technicolor trip below the Rio Grande where we see many delightful sights rural and urban, and the picturesque folk-ways of the inhabitants. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- f WATER SPORTS (Sports Parade)—Scenes in rather crude Technicolor of the diving, swimming and surf board riding of champions. Vita.
- f WHITE SAILS—A handsome film of the voyage of a windjammer from Australia to England, beautifully photographed. Vitaphone.
- f WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY (Cinescope)—Introducing the art and methods of four prominent women photographers. Columbia.
- f* WONDERS OF THE SEA (Adventurous Cameraman)—The strange forms of marine life to be found on an Australian sand-bar are photographed in fascinating and beautiful movement. 20th Century-Fox.

MUSICALS

- f FORTY BOYS AND A SONG—Lads between 8 and 14 years attending a school founded by Robert Mitchell display their art as a choral group singing traditional songs. Vitaphone.
- f MINSTREL DAYS—The big names of the by-gone minstrel days are re-enacted by a group of contemporaries and the true flavor of the minstrel show is captured. Vitaphone.
- f UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BAND—The band of the University of Southern California puts on a concert of varsity songs and the songs of the armed forces with imagination and glamor. Vitaphone.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

- fj ALL THIS AND RABBIT STEW (cartoon)—A rather funny adventure in the life of an irresponsible rabbit who has no intention of providing anyone with dinner. Vitaphone.
- fj BIRD TOWER, THE (TerryToon Cartoon)—The Bok Tower, a bird haven, is interpreted as a lavish resort hotel for bird-families in this cartoon. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj BRAVE LITTLE BAT, THE (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A nice little dope of a bat saves a strange mouse when a giant cat invades their home. Vitaphone.
- f FOX AND THE GRAPES, THE—A color Rhapsody cartoon about a fox whose happy picnic was completely spoiled by a designing crow with a bunch of sour grapes. Colorful and amusing. Columbia.
- fj FLYING BEAR (Cartoon)—The bear's animated plane is delightful in its aerial maneuvers with Army planes and one pelican. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.
- fj PLUTO JUNIOR (Walt Disney Cartoon)—Welcome to a new screen moppet in the person of Pluto's meek but over-curious child. His everyday adventures in a backyard are a delight. RKO Radio.
- fj PORKY'S MIDNIGHT MATINEE (Looney Toon Cartoon)—Porky inadvertently lets a precious African pigmy ant out of its cage and spends a hectic night trying to recapture it. Vitaphone.
- fj SADDLE SILLY (Merrie Melody Cartoon)—A delightfully funny saga of the pony express tearing through thick and thin. In Technicolor. Vitaphone.
- fj SLAP HAPPY HUNTERS (TerryToon Cartoon)—An amusing color cartoon about a duck and a cat who make life miserable for the jungle animals until a resourceful mosquito drives them away. 20th Century-Fox.
- fj SNOWTIME FOR COMEDY (Cartoon)—Two dogs after a single bone set to a fine musical score. In Technicolor. Vitaphone.
- fj WHO'S ZOO IN HOLLYWOOD (Color Rhapsody)—The cartoonists turn caricaturists of film stars in this travelogue of the pets at a zoo. Columbia.
- fj YARN ABOUT YARNS, A (TerryToon Cartoon)—A TerryToon Cartoon which, as its title suggests, combines several themes from juvenile stories. It's about a black sheep who cries wolf too often and loses his mother to the wolf when the villain really comes. The black sheep rescues her, however, and reforms. Quite cute. 20th Century-Fox.

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Preston Sturges at work on "Sullivan's Travels"

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REGARDING THE DEPARTMENTS

Exceptional Photoplays

This department reviews photoplays of unusual merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers. Its ratings are: Exceptional, Honorable Mention and Critical Comment. The opinions of the Committee, composed of trained students and critics of the screen, are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the pictures, covering both their excellence and defects.

Chairman—Richard Griffith

Secretary—Arthur Beach

Committee

Dorothy Chamberlain	John A. McAndrew
Alistair Cooke	Mary B. Miller
Otis Ferguson	Frances Taylor Patterson
Robert Gessner	J. K. Paulding
Robert Giroux	Russell Potter
Henry Hart	John B. Turner
Hattie S. Heymann	Frank Ward

S. Bernard Wortis

Selected Pictures

This department reviews pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preferences as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The majority opinion of the Review Committee forms

the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. The Review Committee consists of approximately 300 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services.

Community Councils

This department reports on matters of interest to those groups conducting community motion picture programs, initiated by the National Board of Review and projected under its National Motion Picture Council, particularly on the activities of Motion Pictures Councils and similar associations in their local work.

Junior Department

This department presents material of especial value to 4-Star Clubs, which are the study or producing groups devoted to motion pictures in schools throughout the country. It also records the opinions expressed by the Board's Young Reviewers, a group of typical school children of New York, aged 8 to 14, who meet from time to time in projection rooms to preview new films.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily those of the National Board of Review and do not invariably represent its editorial policy.

Editorially Speaking - - -

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, in appointing Mr. Lowell Mellet as the government liaison with all branches of the motion picture industry, wrote to him: "The American motion picture is one of our most effective media in informing and entertaining our citizens. The motion picture must remain free insofar as national security will permit. I want no censorship of the motion picture; I want no restrictions placed thereon which will impair the usefulness of the film other than those very necessary restrictions which the dictates of safety make imperative."

This is clear and reassuring. A certain amount of censorship is inevitably necessary in war-time. But one of the things about censorship, always, is that once it gets a hold it sticks and grows. And another thing is that censorship, imposed for one purpose, has a way of being interpreted to serve other purposes. We can foresee something of this in the reports that the New York legislature is going to debate, in their coming session, changes in that section of the Education Law (upon which censorship in New York is engrafted apparently for all time) that would allow the banning of such films as the Nazi "Victory in the West." By deciding that these films were news reels the New York censors gave themselves a reason for not interfering with their public showing, in spite of wide and vigorous protest. How are they going to deal with such films in the future—by reviewing all newsreels? And when censorship of newsreels begins, where is it to stop?

WHO thinks life in the armed services of the United States is funny? Funny in the stale, vulgar, all-out-of-the-same-mould style of the farces the movies have been making? Audiences, evidently. For they must be what make these things seem attractive business ventures for the producers. Maybe it is the names of the comic stars that get the audiences into the theatres, but, once there, enough of them, from their guffaws, seem to enjoy it.

It's an old truism that audiences get the pictures they deserve. Is it actually a fact that in these days we deserve no better pictures of the life our men in service live? That life, with its countless varieties of Americans rubbing together in a mortally serious business, is incredibly rich in American character, striking perpetual sparks of humor which the men themselves are the first to make the most of, which is what saves them from the deadening boredom of waiting for action. Can't we have some of that life on the screen? Or are the only ones who could put it there doing their work far from Hollywood?

THE selection of *Citizen Kane* as the best film of 1941 by the Board's Committee on Exceptional Photoplays, and then by the New York Film Critics Circle, emphasizes one point: the reward that can come to a producer for courage and persistence. Courage in backing an unpredictable talent in an untried field, and persistence in vigorously continuing that backing in the face of old traditions and adverse pressure. Mr. Schaefer of RKO risked a lot when he gave Orson Welles the chance to be Orson Welles on the screen. In return he has gained enormously in prestige: we hope he has gained something in financial returns. And the whole film industry has gained something in the unforeseeable influence an unrestricted new creative force may have in the growth of the motion picture art.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Ten Best 1941

THE Committee on Exceptional Photoplays has voted its choice of the ten best pictures of 1941 and has made its annual award for the best fiction film, *Citizen Kane*, and the best documentary, *Target for Tonight*. This time with remarkable union of judgment the members of the Committee selected the following list of fiction films in the order given:

1. *Citizen Kane*
2. *How Green Was My Valley*
3. *The Little Foxes*
4. *The Stars Look Down*
5. *Dumbo*
6. *High Sierra*
7. *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*
8. *Tom, Dick and Harry*
9. *The Road to Zanzibar*
10. *The Lady Eve*

CITIZEN KANE, written by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Orson Welles, produced and directed by Orson Welles, photographed by Gregg Toland, music by Bernard Herrman. Distributed by RKO-Radio. This remarkable film, the first made by Orson Welles, was selected for its splendid marshalling of cinematic devices. For Mr. Welles, besides having a good portion of authentic talent himself, is a canny and resourceful artist. The methods he uses to translate his story into movie terms are methods discovered and employed by a generation of directors before him, but rarely in the short history of the photoplay has anyone brought them in concerted effectiveness to the full flower of which they are capable. In the film Welles gives to the motion picture something that is partly his own personality and partly a craftsmanship that adds elements from the radio and the stage to cinematic technique that it did not have before. And by these means he makes his case history of an American millionaire a sharp, ironic film, brilliantly executed in all its phases.

HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY, adapted by Philip Dunne from Richard Llewellyn's novel, directed by John Ford, photographed by Arthur Miller, music by Alfred Newman. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck for 20th Century-Fox, distributed by 20th Century-Fox. In the rather rambling memories of a man recalling his boyhood in a little Welsh mining town, memories as unplotted as might emerge in anyone's fond recollection, John Ford has found something to put his best craftsmanship and feeling into, and no one has better craftsmanship in movies, nor sounder and tenderer feeling, than John Ford at his best. It is surprising to look back on the film and realize how much of it is pure visual action, pictures powerfully composed, dramatically photographed, smoothly and eloquently put together.

THE LITTLE FOXES, adapted from her play by Lillian Hellman, assisted by Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell, and Arthur Kober, directed by William Wyler, photographed by Gregg Toland, music by Meredith Wilson. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn, distributed by RKO-Radio. Made from a play the film is compact and streamlined, with a dramatic unity that is just as much an advantage on the screen as on the stage. Lillian Hellman has taken her own play and done expertly the things to make it a motion picture—deepening its background, visually and psychologically, expanding its action from the confining walls of a room to the whole area of house and town in which the life she pictures is lived, and creating the flow of action that makes a movie move.

THE STARS LOOK DOWN, adapted by J. B. Williams from A. J. Cronin's novel, directed by Carol Reed, photographed by Mutz Greenbaum. Produced by I. Goldsmith, distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Grim and bitter and beautiful by reason of its theme, its fidelity to human nature and the vast artistry employed in its making, the film compels the deepest

emotions and a searing introspection. The story, an unvarnished and unrelieved parable about a miner and his son who fight for the protection of their own people working in the shafts, is woven with all the richness of detail and characterization peculiar to the best British films and is controlled by a rigid faithfulness to theme that admits no unessential businesses to distract or relieve the overwhelming tragedy brought on by the carelessness, deceit, selfishness and self-delusion of men that nothing can purge but blood and tears. Acting and direction and the other technical crafts have fabricated a film of this splendid story that unerringly draws out of its black pitifulness a rich spiritual beauty.

DUMBO, feature cartoon made by Walt Disney from the story by Helen Aberson and Harold Pearl, adapted by Joe Grant and Dick Huemer, music by Oliver Wallace and Frank Churchill, lyrics by Ned Washington. Distributed by RKO-Radio. In this exquisite film Disney goes back to his oldest kind of cartoon narrative but goes forward to a new brilliance and assurance of technique and to a delightful freshness of fun and charm that he has rarely reached before.

HIGH SIERRA, adapted by John Huston and W. R. Burnett from the latter's novel, directed by Raoul Walsh, photographed by Tony Gaudio, music by Adolph Deutsch, associate producer Mark Hellinger. Produced and distributed by Warner Brothers. If one could see—and endure—all the good gangster films that have been made, and see them as new, this picture might well loom up as one of the best and most penetrating. Certainly some of the things in it, particularly the supremely good acting of Humphrey Bogart, rank with the most memorable things in this type of picture.

HERE COMES MR. JORDAN, adapted by Sidney Buchman and Seton I. Miller from the play "Heaven Can Wait" by Harry Segall, directed by Alexander Hall, photographed by Joseph Walker. Produced by Everett Riskin, distributed by Columbia.

Rich in humor and poignancy the film for all its freshness and apparent effortlessness is a remarkable compound of taste, control and cinematic art which reflects no small glory on Alexander Hall, the director, Robert Montgomery and the rest of the people who made it.

TOM, DICK AND HARRY, adapted by Paul Jarrico from his own story, directed by Garson Kanin, photographed by Merritt Gerstad, music by Roy Webb. Produced by Robert Sisk, distributed by RKO-Radio. With a plot of the wispiest consisting of the problem that faces a telephone girl confronted with proposals from three gentlemen whose respective virtues are dependability, wealth and joyous recklessness, this film, thanks to fine direction and the superb skill of the cast, turns out to be a comedy of great verve and originality, especially in the imaginative dream sequences wherein wedded life with each of the men is depicted in fantastic sets and excellent satire.

THE ROAD TO ZANZIBAR, adapted from the story by Don Hartman and Sy Bartlett, directed by Victor Schertzinger, photographed by Ted Tetzlaff. Produced by Paul Jones, distributed by Paramount Pictures. The three qualities that stand out above all others in this film are its spontaneity, the unaffected fun the stars had in making it and, of course, Bing Crosby. Here his overwhelming good nature, his subtle sophistication, his unique flair for humor, his droll invention, are all fused and blended by an artistry that in its very perfection is apt to be missed, leaving only the satisfaction and exaltation of a well constructed drink.

THE LADY EVE, screenplay, derived from Monckton Hoffs, by Preston Sturges, directed by Preston Sturges, photographed by Victor Milner. Produced and distributed by Paramount Pictures. Preston Sturges remounts an antique idea of mixed identity with such a wealth of creative energy and such mastery of all the elements he needed to fashion it into a film as to make it seem wholly novel and bursting with comic spirit.

TARGET FOR TONIGHT, original screen story by Harry Watt and B. Cooper, directed by Harry Watt, acted by officers and men of the Royal Air Force. British production distributed in this country by Warner Brothers. This film shows British documentary technique in fullest flower. All that was awkward and difficult in their earlier use of natural backgrounds and real people enacting their own lives is now as smooth and graceful as a fiction film and infinitely more convincing. To science and sincerity they have added passion.

Besides the above selections the Committee cited *The Forgotten Village* for Honorable Mention in the documentary class and singled out as the best of the small number of foreign language films they saw in the past year the French picture, *Pepe le Moko*, which was the inspiration and model of the American movie *Algiers*.

Apart from the general excellence of acting in all the films chosen as the best the Committee considers the following screen performances worthy of special praise:

Sara Algood in *How Green Was My Valley*
Mary Astor in *The Great Lie* and *The Maltese Falcon*

Ingrid Bergman in *Rage in Heaven*

Humphrey Bogart in *High Sierra* and *The Maltese Falcon*

Gary Cooper in *Sergeant York*

Donald Crisp in *How Green Was My Valley*

Bing Crosby in *The Road to Zanzibar* and *Birth of the Blues*

George Coulouris in *Citizen Kane*

Patricia Collinge in *The Little Foxes*

Bette Davis in *The Little Foxes*

Isobel Elsom in *Ladies in Retirement*

Joan Fontaine in *Suspicion*

Greta Garbo in *Two-Faced Woman*

James Gleason in *Meet John Doe* and *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*

Walter Huston in *All That Money Can Buy*
Ida Lupino in *High Sierra* and *Ladies in Retirement*

Roddy MacDowell in *How Green Was My Valley*

Robert Montgomery in *Rage in Heaven* and *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*

Ginger Rogers in *Kitty Foyle* and *Tom, Dick and Harry*

James Stephenson in *The Letter* and *Shining Victory*

Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane*

The poll of the Review Committee of the National Board of Review on the basis of popular appeal chose the following films as its ten best in order of preference:

1. How Green Was My Valley
2. Sergeant York
3. Citizen Kane
4. Here Comes Mr. Jordan
5. The Little Foxes
6. Dumbo
7. The Philadelphia Story
8. Blossoms in the Dust
9. Meet John Doe
10. One Foot in Heaven

Sullivan's Travels

Story and adaptation by Preston Sturges, directed by Preston Sturges, photographed by John Seitz and Farciot Edouard. Produced by Paul Jones for Paramount.

Cast

John L. Sullivan	Joel McCrea
The Girl	Veronica Lake
Mr. LeBrand	Robert Warwick
Mr. Jones	William Demarest
Mr. Casalsis	Franklin Pangborn
Mr. Hadrian	Porter Hall
Mr. Valdelle	Byron Foulger
Secretary	Margaret Hayes
Sullivan's Butler	Robert Greig
Sullivan's Valet	Eric Blore
The Doctor	Torben Meyer
Cameraman	Victor Botel
Radio Man	Richard Webb
Colored Chef	Charles Moore

WHEN a movie makes people laugh it renders a salutary service. This is the point that Mr. Sturges sets out to make in *Sullivan's Travels*. In his preface to the film he announces that the picture is dedicated to all the funny men, clowns and mountebanks who throughout time have made people laugh. He then spins his yarn of how a gifted director of comedies, sick of the gay and successful film inanities he has made, determines to devote his talents to movies of social significance, to a cinema that shows unabashedly the agonies of men, disease and want and pain. Taunted as to what he knows about all these things what with his background of



Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea in "Sullivan's Travels"

private prep school and fancy college and his present weekly salary that runs into four figures, he leaves the studio clothed as a tramp with only a dime in his pocket to experience at first hand the misery of the outcast and the dispossessed. As the title suggests Mr. Sturges seems to have been more than a little inspired by the Swiftian technic to drive home a point. That, of course, is as far as the parallel can go, for Mr. Sturges has neither the withering mockery nor the raging despair of the unhappy Dublin dean. Nor for that matter has he Swift's scope or mastery. But the technical device is there: to prove by an absurd fantasy a deep and moving truth, in this case the need for laughter among men.

Few people making movies write as well as Preston Sturges. His past pictures have led us to expect that, and in *Sullivan's Travels* he equals and possibly exceeds the excellent record he has set. Crisp, sure and swift this tragi-comedy leads Sullivan

from the glass and chrome of his studio down the lanes of human misery and degradation in a series of anti-climaxes that are convulsingly funny, until replete with the sight of sordidness and suffering he gives up his odyssey save for one last round in which he plans to hand out a thousand dollars in five dollar bills to such riff-raff as he may meet in an evening's tour of the slums and "jungles." Had the film ended here it would have been a bright, witty, cruel travesty on want and hopelessness, the more cold-bloodedly repulsive for its brilliance and slick triviality.

But Mr. Sullivan's career as a *voyeur* of human debasement and pain ends the night of his dilettant distribution of bakshish with a crack on the head, and he awakens a nameless tramp, accused of malicious assault and condemned to the tortures of a criminal chain gang. There he partakes of the fortunes of the man-forgotten under the brutal eye of an overseer. The one trickle of human kindness that comes to

him and his companions is an invitation by the local colored congregation to come to a movie. It's a Mickey Mouse cartoon. The convicts laugh. For the first time Sullivan sees his wretched companions moved by a happy emotion; the powerful gift of mirth lifts them for the moment out of their horror and unhappiness.

On his way back to Hollywood on a plane (for after all this is a parable and the good old *deus ex machina* is as handy and as at home here as it is cleverly used) a new and happier Sullivan shocks his employers by announcing he is not going to make his epic on human suffering, he is planning a new comedy. Why? they ask. "Because I haven't suffered enough."

This is the first time Mr. Sturges has attempted to employ his delightful talents on a theme that transcends mere entertainment and he does it with no loss of the verve, speed and wittiness he displayed in his earlier films. He has the knack, so rare in the movies, of seeming to inspire all his artists with the enthusiasm and energy he possesses to so high a degree, and to blend all their art into a single entity. People who previously have appeared to have no unusual talent turn up in his films with surprising powers of interpretation and effectiveness. Miss Lake who up to now has been little more than eye-delightful has become a charming comedienne; the same change seems to have come over Joel McCrea. The ability thus to inspire all the people who work with him in a picture to do their best and to do it within and according to his design is one of the happiest talents a director can possess and it is all too unusual, worse luck for the motion picture as an art. Chaplin has it, and so has Orson Welles and several others. The secret seems to lie in the fact that these men not only direct their films but write them too. When the time comes, as one day we hope it will, that the writer-director will be the rule rather than the exception in the movie world, the film will really take its place among its sister arts and produce integral works, not only conceived but also made by their creators, as Mr. Sturges has conceived and made *Sullivan's Travels*.

Rated Exceptional.

A. B.

Critical Comment

A Comedy of Bad Manners

THE movies being today's household organ for the spreading of fads of culture, it was inevitable that that most lionized of literary mud-slingers, Sheridan Whiteside, should be photographed in all his rampant glory for the benefit of the benighted art-enthusiasts who couldn't be reached by the road-shows of the play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. The play was a scorching portrait of some of today's theatrical and literary headliners being very much at home—an intimate candid-camera view into their backyards and closets and, though it was treated as farce rather than instruction, the play presents some of the most considered and articulate, the most artfully sculptured and potent insults of this generation. On stage, the formula proved highly successful so little need was seen to alter it for film purposes. Just plunk the camera down in the living room of the gentle Ernest Stanleys of Ohio and catch the chips as they fly from the constant cuttingness of Whiteside's poisoned tongue. To be sure, there are one or two timid little efforts to shift the scene but the camera always returns in a joyous rush to the jaded Stanley's home. And few would have it otherwise for here is a circus designed to draw raucous laughter from all whose constitutions can bear 112 minutes of fancy nose-thumbing.

The film has been well cast, the most credit going to Monty Woolley since he is at least half of the total effect (without raising the point of whether or not the total effect is palatable). Then, in a number of little but sharply funny parts we find hearty playing with a vengeance. Jimmy Durante's uncompromising earthiness, Reginald Gardner's Paragon of Wit are elegant farce. Billie Burke's familiar confusion reaches a high point in one sortie with Mr. Woolley. From the stage play are drawn a frenzied nurse verging on an understandable state of collapse and a fragile, ethereal old spinster who floats across the room like

a stray bit of moon-dust. Also, we have Ann Sheridan doing what may or may not be her best as a super-siren. One feels that she would offer little competition to Katharine Cornell on the stage as the script intended her to do. Her looks (and the additions to her looks contributed by wardrobe and make-up departments) are right, but one misses the relish and sting in her shrewd lines which the others, with more stage experience behind them, put into their delivery. Lastly, there is another character to be mentioned though it is a small and graceless role—being a combination stooge to Sherry and ingenue lead, to be played more naturally than the other parts. It is enacted by none other than Miss Bette Davis. Here is just a simple, uncomplicated case of man-trouble. In her life the years are numbering more and more but not the beaus. Miss Davis projects this humanness very nicely, looking right cute and smiling a healthy, normal smile. When the right man does ask her for a date, she behaves just as any average girl would do which is quite a change for La Davis. It is usually a boring device to watch a pair of straight actors getting across the needed romancing among an assortment of wildly caricatured comics but Miss Davis and Richard Travis capture the audience's warmest sympathies.

The fact that a good stage-play has been written provides little reason to clap the shoulders of the film personages here involved. The direction, one would guess, was done to a metronome with a strict adherence to the lead-up beat, the gag beat, the lead-up beat, the gag beat. Also, the news that a new high has been reached in single-handed delivery of scurrilities to one's fellow-men does not automatically imply that a record for laughs has been broken. However, *The Man Who Came to Dinner* is diverting work on film and merits being seen as a new freak on the Hollywood horizon.

Movies and the War

SINCE the crash of war we have become accustomed to vast and radical changes in points of view. There is no other course now left to the people of the United States except to win through to victory. The President has been proven right, and, bitter though the smack of humble pie in their mouths, his former dissenters rather unanimously have girded on his sword and set their faces with him towards the harrowing future. Such a reversal, however, did not affect the motion picture industry. All along the folk who make the movies have faced the issue of the world menace. They have hated the powers now arrayed against us and our allies, hated them so ardently that in spite of criticism, nay, in spite of the threat of congressional investigation (a threat which normally would throw them into a palsy), they have held their course to damn with all the resources in their power the evil that would enslave and destroy our world. For this wholehearted patriotism through all the period of confusion that preceded the seventh of December 1941, patriotism not only to their country but to the civilized world, the film industry deserves the deepest gratitude of the American people.

The movies, scarred by so many artistic sins and so apt to hysteria, have in the anti-Nazi and "propaganda" films been far more tasteful and level-headed than one would have suspected. This does not mean that some of the camp and national emergency inspired movies were not awful. Many of them were. One thing, however, that does the cinema credit above any artistic triumph is the basic moderation that is true in practically all the war films. The element of hate played a small part in them. Sympathy and pity rather stole the lion's share of the emotions projected. Not that the Nazis were not held up for the brutes they are, but that the men and women who held and are holding the ramparts of freedom and human dignity are honored for the meed of blood and sweat and tears which they have offered in pledge of their



faith in the perpetuity and holiness of the cause of free men.

The propaganda pictures have up to now set forth the spy system and fifth column activities of the enemy, the plight of the Jews, Protestants and Catholics in the Reich, the hopelessness of the refugees throughout Europe, the high, brave saga of the "underground" in Germany and the conquered countries, the bravery and toughness of the embattled British, and, with a gusto that at times was embarrassing, they have told the story of America arming for war on the land, in the sky and on the sea. And they have done all this in the American way, with a lighthearted, bombastic, almost collegiate emotional enthusiasm which in reality adds up to a gigantic generosity, untamed by fear or privation, young, vigorous, never doubting its destiny.

But all this was before Pearl Harbor, these were the rallies before the big game where laughs and tears come easy. Then came the kick in the groin. The dirty tricks that had been played in the lands beyond our two seas were meted out to us. The boys in the locker room had to get out there and play a game without rules and against an adversary without honor. How will the movies reflect this new America? The dominant emotion now is not the grumpy gaiety of army camps, nor is it pity for the suffering nor is it disgust for the acts of an abject and brutal way of life. The dominant emotion now is cold rage. With treasure and blood we have dedicated ourselves to finish the fight.

What may we expect in this our hour of crisis from the men and artists who give us the movies? Undoubtedly we will have war stories aplenty; note the titles of forthcoming films: *Pacific Blackout*, *Spy Swatters*, *She's in the Army Now*, *I'm an American*, *Midnight Blackout*, *Yellow Menace*, *Hong Kong*, *Channel Port*, *Torpedo Boat*, *True to the Army*, *The Fleet's In*, *To the Shores of Tripoli*, and many others in similar vein. All of which is very fine. But something more is needed to keep up the morale of the nation for those days ahead that the President has warned us will be dark and even disappointing. Then the movies will have to use their far reaching

and incalculably potent influence to comfort, relax and inspire us in a fashion proper for free men who have inherited the high custodianship of civilization. The enemy has used film to terrify his victims and to rouse the black vanity and jungle bloodlust of his unfortunate people. We may not do that and keep our sacred resolve to rid the world forever from fear and hate.

Bloops

IN whatever other ways the year just ended has turned out, in the film world it was, they will tell you, the best yet. On history's record of glories it will be long remembered as the great year of the sweater-girl, her rise and fall; the year when oomphism went the way of the bustle; the year of the Gable-Turner kiss, the year our Bette suffered an honest smile to cross her erstwhile viperine face and another actress of the grim-reality school concocted the "chica-choca" for comic purposes, although we might add that this last has been interpreted in a different light by some.

This year writers outdid themselves with inventions. They evolved an utterly new type of film by smartening up a bevy of bedrooms long unused and inhabiting them with married couples instead of would-be-weds, which made all the difference in the world. It was all very modish. Then they also hit on the answer to critics' complaints of too many happy endings. As a substitute they offered the Unhappy ending, which somehow was just as happy. Thus we had such happy-enders as Mesdames Scott, Oberon, Young or Colbert being happily situated in the second reel but having this happiness snatched away until, having reached the ripe age of 60 or 70 in the last reel and the ultimate in craftsmanship from the House of Westmore, it all resulted in pretty much the same thing anyway. This fad was started by Robert Donat, we guess, and most recently Robert Young was subjected to the same sort of lovelessness. We

wonder what this will lead audiences to believe of the familiar final clinches in forthcoming pictures where the ending finds a two-day romance consummating in marriage. If another reel had been made would the hero have turned out to be a listless lout who forgot about his romance a month later, like Miss Oberon's big heart-break, or a sot like Miss Scott's husband? Ah, these are deep waters.

Screen writing had its nadirs as well as its zeniths, however; witness the writer with head away who decreed that Dr. Kildare's eternal bride be splattered all over the street by a truck. Another strange affair resulted when some tear-gas bombs wandered away from the plug-uglies' lot and popped up in a Gene Autry opus, thereby upsetting all one's beliefs about the loyalty of men to guns in the woolly west.

The scenic artists marched on in 1941 as never before, their greatest triumph being, we herald, that stream on the M.G.M. lot which was so delicately attuned as to mute its ripples to a dulcet accompaniment during the exchange of love vows by the stars, while it changed its voice to a note of sweet but enigmatic sympathy during the tryst of the heroine and the 2nd male lead and just went entirely silent when this last named man was finally jilted. This may have been the reason for our Johnny's resigning from the Boy Scouts, for he recently complained, after a nice outing, of the vulgar intonings of a brook au naturel.

The most harrowing news of the year was the sad report that Ann Sheridan uses artificial finger-nails for her films. It seems, though it is a bitter pill to take, that Ann dislikes overly-long nails. But be cheered, for it has been announced to the world by the same source that Olivia de Havilland can actually sew on a button and even did it for none other than Elliot Nugent, lucky fellow! to prove it. For the most depraved publicity of the year, we nominate an item on the program of the Surrealist Festival at the 5th Ave. Playhouse which ran—"We don't wish to break up your home but if you do throw light things at one another because of this show, hold us responsible—The Management." What are we coming

to?—substituting frankness for all the time-honored virtues of the Noble Pressman?

1941 also saw the outcropping of a fascinating new sport to replace miniature golf. We are playing it all the time and love it! It was invented in connection with a picture about the Okefenokee swamp in the advertising for which the skull and cross bones are used as a symbol of terror. The game is, upon receiving one of the publicists' little blanks, to fill in a square with your own favorite, personal symbol of terror. "Is it man—beast—idea? These days there are symbols for everything. What's yours for terror?" Thus the little blank hurtles the challenge right into your lap. The instructions are, "Draw it or paste in a news clipping or photo." And they offer tickets to the movie as a prize, though they warn that the game is only for "thrill-seekers!" We like to think of ourselves as in this class and have a wealth of ideas for our terrifying symbols. We get them from our best-loved blurb-artists. For example, pictures of Miss Miranda's headgear composed of portable truck-farms in glorious Technicolor make us clutch our collective throat. The picture we saw in an ad of Humphrey Bogart on that high sierra, or the one of Orson Welles towering over a horde of extras really was terrific and gave us a genuine taste of the well-known willies. The mere thought of Gene Tierney (who is out-Lamouring Dorothy) on the same screen with Victor Mature, the latter in a fez to boot, makes our blood run cold. And as for the nights of wide-awake horror suffered in contemplation of Erroll Flynn pitted against 6,000 Indians in the re-enactment of that famous last stand—well, we just can't decide which of a thousand things terrify us the most. The only thing left for 1942 to contribute will be to have a chorine jump right off the page advertising, for instance, that *Hey-hey in the Hayloft* which Joel McCrea says he directed in his new film, *Sullivan's Travels*. She would be just one of 999 blonde bombshells appearing in the film and she would pick the innocent reader up by the scruff of the neck and throw him headlong into the theatre where her picture was playing.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

NOT leaving the field entirely to the critics, Motion Picture Councils and other community groups, interested in motion picture study, recorded their second annual opinion poll in voting on the 10 best pictures of 1941.

The result of this vote was, in order of preference:

Sergeant York
Blossoms In the Dust
Here Comes Mr. Jordan
The Little Foxes
Meet John Doe
One Foot in Heaven
The Philadelphia Story
Cheers for Miss Bishop
Fantasia
Citizen Kane

While these 10 pictures received the greatest number of votes there were several close runners-up, including *Kitty Foyle*, *How Green Was My Valley*, *That Hamilton Woman*, *Men of Boystown* and *Land of Liberty*. More than 60 titles were mentioned in the various lists received, indicating the wide variety of judgments on the best pictures.

These votes coming from communities large and small in 22 different states, from clubs, colleges, museums as well as Councils, form a representative cross section of opinion from those who patronize and who study the movies.

A list was sent to the various groups near the end of the year to aid them in their voting. This list was made up from the monthly vote on the five best pictures sent in by the groups during the year on forms provided by the National Council. There is uncertainty about whether to continue this monthly vote through 1942. Some groups reported they liked to secure these current votes, that it centered attention on the good pictures as they came along, that it made the group members conscious of whether they were seeing the best pictures, and that it aroused interesting discussion at meetings. On the other hand some reported it was too much work, that they couldn't get an accurate opinion through a verbal

vote and didn't have time to secure tabulated votes and one or two alas said, "We don't see the best pictures." Just because it did arouse these reactions is perhaps reason it should be continued. Let us know what you think.

But even if the month by month vote is not taken there will be, of course, again the annual vote at the end of the year so we can be thinking in a comparative way of the pictures as we see them from January on. And tell us if you wish to register your group opinion through the year.

The votes of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays and the Review Committee of the Board on the 10 best are recorded elsewhere in this magazine.

THE annual report of the St. Louis Better Films Council reports that the Libraries of Greater St. Louis are most cooperative in giving space on the bulletin boards to the approved lists. This Council also reports progress made in bringing motion picture appreciation to the students of the St. Louis Public Schools. This is being accomplished through the cooperation of the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent. The Council appreciates the privilege of working with the youth of the schools and is impressed with the friendly spirit of cooperation.

THE Better Films Council of Grand Rapids (Mich.) conducted as one of its outstanding 1941 activities "a survey to give Grand Rapids citizens of all ages and classes an opportunity to express their attitude toward motion picture entertainment." At the starting of the survey Mrs. J. W. Livingston, President of the Council, wrote: "Since we wanted a cross section of answers from school children under sixteen years of age, as well as those of adults from sixteen up, we made up two questionnaire forms. The children's questionnaire, with the approval of the Board of Education, we distributed through the schools. Each of our forty-five grade schools was covered, although not more than two grades in each

school—getting an even distribution of grades, ages, and residential sections thereby. The other group covered was made up of older high school students, college students in the various public and parochial colleges, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., the church groups and the Parent-Teacher Associations within the city and county, as well as the civic groups.”

The survey was accomplished with a great deal of interest and resulted in helpful findings for the Council on which to base future programs and activities. “Both children and adults expressed a decided preference for the Hardy Family series, then the Dr. Christian, Dr. Kildare type of films, detective stories, westerns, musicals, and comedies in that order. Sophisticated and what they term marital “stuff” was definitely not on their preferred list.”

Mrs. Livingston reports their Council helped to publicize *Blossoms in the Dust* because they so heartily approved of it, and had an enthusiastic preview audience for *One Foot in Heaven*. She says, “Here is a film which will make new movie devotees in our town and which provides excellent material when speaking to the many church groups we are called upon to address.”

The first of the Council’s scheduled dinner meetings was devoted to the subject “Motion Pictures and Morale,” and had as speakers the chaplain of nearby Fort Custer and the enlisted soldier who manages the Fort theatres. The next meeting will be held in a school and the subject will be “The Motion Pictures’ Use in Modern Educational Methods” and following that will be “Motion Pictures in the Field of Art.” The Council is buying books and other material to gradually build up a library for the use of members and to keep the speakers’ bureau up-to-date. As a social project, they have planned a bridge party and a show of Hollywood-designed clothes in the early spring.

THE Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee planned a different sort of program for its first fall luncheon, a clever radio burlesque, furnishing a travesty on commercial radio programs. The managers of the local radio stations served as judges.

With this Committee broadcasting regularly this was just another evidence of community tie-up.

THE Motion Picture Council of Jacksonville (Fla.) honored Charles Coburn, well known stage and Hollywood character actor, at one of its fall luncheons. Mr. Coburn was introduced by Mrs. Fred Evans, past president of the Council. He spoke of his early days on the stage and of his first motion picture experience. He pointed out the differences between the stage and the screen from the actor’s standpoint.

THE Cincinnati (Ohio) Motion Picture Council planned three timely meetings of the year devoted to films of different countries, October, Hawaiian films; February, Guatemala films; and May, Mexican films. Other programs cover a visit to the Cincinnati Public Library, a study of “Music and Motion Pictures” and a book review.

THE Greater Detroit (Mich.) Motion Picture Council opened its 1941-42 season with a program emphasizing “The Importance of Motion Pictures in the Building of Friendly Relations and Better Understanding Between Nations.” Colored motion pictures of Latin America were shown and the president of the Detroit branch of the Pan-American Fellowship was speaker.

THE Louisiana Council for Motion Pictures sponsored its third annual motion picture institute in November. The purpose of the institutes, reports Mrs. A. S. Tucker advisory vice-president, is to bring together educators and community leaders interested in promoting a wider use of motion pictures in education, and also to bring to the attention of the public the study program that is carried on in the schools through the use of such pictures. The institute was conducted by the regional chairman of the Louisiana Committee on Motion Pictures of the Department of Secondary Education of the National Education

Association, who is second vice-president of the Louisiana Council. Examples of motion pictures used in the schools for the study of literature, art and other subjects, student reviews, criticisms and discussions with comments by educators made up the demonstration program. The luncheon speaker was the speech director of Louisiana State University.

THE Worcester (Mass.) Better Films Council noted its tenth anniversary by holding a conference on Nov. 6 to which were invited organizations interested in promoting the best in motion pictures. There was a round table for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of problems and accomplishments of various film groups. A luncheon and a panel discussion continued the day's program on the subject "Measuring the Movies."

THE Lincoln (Neb.) Better Films Council's Oct. program was designed to show how visual education is used in the schools. A member of the visual education department of the city schools presented the film "Alaska's Silver Millions" from the university extension division.

THE East St. Louis (Ill.) Better Films Council had its annual Cinema Breakfast on Oct. 9 and it was really a breakfast, service beginning at 9 o'clock and the program at 10. Coming together at this early hour indicates a variety in program planning as well as a real interest.

FROM time to time Council presidents elected or reelected are reported. Here are some others who are continuing to carry on their services through the current year. Mrs. Lewis P. Addoms, Motion Picture Council for Brooklyn; Dr. Campton Bell, Denver (Col.) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Piercy Chestney, Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee; Mrs. Douglas W. Copeland, Lynchburg (Va.) Film Society; Mrs. Allen Cox, Phillips Co. (Ark.) Better Films Council; Mrs. Dean Gray Edwards, Motion Picture Council of Central Queens (L. I., N. Y.); Mrs. Arthur D. Kerwin, Greater

Detroit (Mich.) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. A. E. Miller, Lima (Ohio) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. Charles T. Owens, Philadelphia (Pa.) Motion Picture Forum; Mrs. Elmer Stewart, Chevy Chase (Md.) Community Film Council; Mrs. Charles W. Swift, Elmira (N. Y.) Motion Picture Council; Mrs. John B. Williams, Toledo (Ohio) Motion Picture Council.

Those serving as president for the first time include Mrs. Charles R. Holton, Better Films Council of Chicagoland; Mrs. W. J. Massa, Staten Island (N. Y.) Better Films Council; Mrs. Clyde B. Moore, Ithaca (N. Y.) Better Films Council; Mrs. John R. Schermerhorn, Finer Films Federation of N. J.; and Mrs. E. D. Snow, Jr., Scarsdale (N. Y.) Motion Picture Council.

SEVERAL new pamphlets helpful when seeking information about visual aids or about government films are available. "Sources of Visual Aids for Instructional Use in Schools" (Pamphlet No. 80) and "Conservation Films in Elementary Schools" (Bulletin 1941, No. 4) are from the Federal Security Agency of the U. S. Office of Education. The first is listed at 15c and the latter at 10c. "Motion Pictures of the United States Department of Agriculture 1941" (Miscellaneous publication No. 451) is the title of a 25 page listing of the films distributed by the Motion Pictures Section, Extension Service of the Department. These as other government publications are available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.

THE first fall meeting of the Chicago chapter of the Residence Lighting Forum had as one of its speakers Mrs. Richard M. McClure, past president of the Better Films Council.

MRS. LeRoy Montgomery, former chairman of the motion pictures for the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution was guest speaker at the first fall meeting of the Staten Island (N. Y.) Better Films Council at the Institute of Arts and Sciences. Her subject was "Motion Picture Appreciation."

JUNIOR DEPARTMENT

FOLLOWING release of the 4-Star Clubs' and Young Reviewers' choices of the year's Ten Best Films, many newspaper notices were of interest, giving the reactions of columnists. A writer for the Washington Post notes that, "By some strange quirk of the juvenile mind, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* finished second. Which goes to show. Precisely what, I wouldn't know."

The comment of Miss Amy H. Crough-ton, reporting in the Rochester, N. Y. Times-Union is in a different vein. "There will always be a mass public for motion pictures made up of persons who resent being forced to bring intelligence to bear on what is shown on the screen. . . . For them are made the films which make as much sense seen backwards as forward. . . . The high caliber of films in the list of "10 Best" voted by the Young Reviewers is a striking tribute to the work of education in motion picture appreciation which is being carried on by schools and libraries all over the country. Undoubtedly it still is true that a considerable section of the movie public has a 12-year-old I.Q. but certainly these young people in the schools have little to do with swelling its numbers."

The Young Reviewers on "SUNDOWN"

The opening of two of Miss Gene Tierney's films in New York has raised a rather challenging question in connection with younger filmgoers. Her pictures were lavish pretentious films, studded with beautiful scenery and dramatic posing but also revealing, deep within their structure, theatricality which today can only be used successfully in broad burlesque of the old mellers. The films were sumptuous phonies and the newspaper reviewers have had a spirited holiday in conjuring up excoriating encomiums. Miss Tierney was deemed the inspiration for the ultimate in *weltschmerz* by the "N. Y. Times" and her film, *Sundown*, was singled out as one of the ten worst offenders in a listing of those films

whose pretentiousness was in remotest proportion to good taste, pictures whose promise was least fulfilled. The Young Reviewers saw the picture *Sundown*, and the following report will simply try to show how much the children were aware of the phoneyisms and to what extent the movie's makers were able to take in their audience.

On their ballots, it was voted very good. Replying to the form questions, they all appreciated learning the strange tribal customs and the rough colonial life in British East Africa. The story, they said, wasn't flawless but it was exciting enough; only one voter confessing an inability to understand all of it. They were also greatly impressed with the grand-opera arias of eloquent flag-waving which were dragged in rather rudely and highlighted to the hilt. They called this fine acting—done with spirit and great force. The message of the picture, strongly pro-British, was received with appreciative solemnity by the children. In a more routine vein, they also praised the picture because the love-making was largely omitted, the fighting was aplenty, and the hero got killed for a change. On these counts, they endorsed the picture.

Nevertheless, the Reviewers did detect much of the artificiality which so engrossed the adult critics. The following statements by various Young Reviewers at the discussion prove this:

"When Gene Tierney was in her house, it was overdone; I don't expect a house like that in the middle of the desert. . . . The outpost was overdone—they don't have posts like that. . . . I couldn't imagine anything like that big cave and slaves. I think it was behind the times. . . . The church was too overdone. It was all right to show it was bombed, but I thought it was going to drop any minute. . . . In the advertising to see this movie, it said that "men fought over her to get a burning kiss from her lips," and I didn't see any fighting. . . . Gene Tierney looked too dressed-up—most of the natives had shorts and she had flowing gowns—and on top she

had hardly anything. . . . She was the only one in the picture who didn't do any acting, you could see how she threw herself down, it was so movieish. . . . She put on too much drama, "oh dear! oh dear!" . . . Just because she is beautiful she sits and looks at you. Any beautiful girl can do that. . . . Her looks could be used to better advantage than just being looked at. . . . She hasn't enough experience to be a really good movie actress. The famous actresses in Hollywood aren't debutantes—they are very well trained."

In all this, the Young Reviewers saw eye-to-eye with the mature critics, with the difference that the former wanted to overlook the deficiencies. They were attracted visually to the film and were informed by it so

they were willing to forgive the phonyisms. They accorded higher acting honors to Joseph Calleia, who does a magnificent job in a supporting role, than to the star, Miss Tierney. They were entertained by the picture but it is obvious that they also hoped for more than they got from it. Politely, they overlook the film's faults recognizing that entertainment must not be too divorced from their own sense of good taste. When they weren't confused, the Young Reviewers were as critical as the newspaper reviewers but they humbly excuse the bad points. The picture will probably be profitable just because of such condescension from audiences, but the Young Reviewers prove that it can't be a successful recipe for very many pictures.

SELECTED PICTURES

Key to Audience Suitability

- f—Family audience (12 years up).
 m—Mature audience (18 years up).
 j—Juvenile audience (Under 12).
 ★—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

Starred Selected Pictures

★THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER

f—*Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Monty Woolley.*
Based on the play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. Directed by William Keighley. Warner Bros.

See Critical Comment, p. 8.

★REMEMBER THE DAY

f—*Claudette Colbert, John Payne.* *Based on the play by Philo Higley and Philip Dunning. Directed by Henry King. 20th Century-Fox.*

Again, we have a long look at the tragic love-affairs in a teacher's life told by means of flash-back. In the spring of her life, she had been secretly married to another teacher in their grammar school but the World War I made it a short-lived romance. Her only solace was in a young pupil, a sensitive boy who was scandalized like the townsfolk by the secret marriage. He had had a deep affection for his teacher which was

badly shaken, but years later when the pupil had risen to be a presidential nominee, the teacher appears before him and he understands and forgives her early affair. The past is recreated with considerable nostalgia, alternately amusing and poignant. Miss Colbert and the young boy are very moving in what might have been an overdose of tear-jerking.

★SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS

f—*Paramount.*

See Exceptional Photoplays, p. 6.

Selected Pictures

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

f—*Humphrey Bogart, Conrad Veidt, Kaaren Verne.* *Original screen story by Leonard Q. Ross and Leonard Spiegelgass. Directed by Vincent Sherman. Warner Bros.*

As a line puts it, there is indeed more here than meets the F.B.I. Bogart is in the familiar role of king-pin in a gangster ring but accidentally gets embroiled in a murder which turns out to be but one tiny facet of the operations of a vast system of fifth columnists. After many exciting narrow escapes, the line is traced up to the

head of the fifth columnists who are at the time plotting an explosion in New York harbor, and Bogart thugs save the city from annihilation. The build-up is swift and effective though the final denouement is rather incredible.

BABES ON BROADWAY

f—Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland. Original screen story by Fred Finklehoffe. Directed by Busby Berkeley. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

This musical review pays tribute to the hordes of youngsters who are as yet undiscovered by the theatrical world but who are nevertheless capable. The gang of them gives a show of their own for a benefit to send some under-privileged kids to the country. However, the acts are the thing in this loud affair and they include everything from blackface to Bernhardt and back. Rooney's exuberance knows no bounds and the camera never gets off him for more than seconds, which should gratify Rooney fans.

BAHAMA PASSAGE

f—Stirling Hayden, Madeleine Carroll. Based on the story by Nelson Hayes. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. Paramount.

Pulchritude, lad-and-lass style, bathed in the sun of the Caribbees and the latest Technicolor, slowly unfolds an Adam-and-Eve story with the shadow of an insane mother and a larcenous father providing the grim relief. The writing is of the slow "poetic" kind with innumerable conversations having their root in love; the direction dallies in the luxury of the color camera in the islands; the film is long on photography but short on drama.

BALL OF FIRE

f—Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck. Original screen story by Billy Wilder and Thomas Monroe. Directed by Howard Hawks. RKO Radio.

A swell idea is embodied in the situation of eight frowsty old bookworms working on an encyclopedia and having to refer to a boogie-wise niterie singer for authoritative information on slang. The opportunities were many for developing this, but the writers chose to drop the theme midway and devote the story to the battle of an

honest man and a gangster for the girl. It is moderately funny and original, chiefly due to a sure performance by Miss Stanwyck and some modest buffoonery by the sages. But they can't quite keep the ball a-rolling.

BEDTIME STORY

m—Frederick March, Loretta Young, Robert Benchley. Original screen story by Horace Jackson and Grant Garrett. Directed by Alexander Hall. Columbia.

A comedy involving a playwright who loves the theatre and his wife, a great actress, who wants a home in the country. On this issue they quarrel and almost get a divorce. By a series of devices the husband manages to get his spouse to compromise and they have both. Rather talky and slow for a good while, but the film ends with a swift riot that is very satisfying. Throughout the cast does a very nice job.

BLUE, WHITE AND PERFECT

f—Lloyd Nolan, Mary Beth Hughes. Based on the character created by Brett Halliday. Directed by Herbert I. Leeds. 20th Century-Fox.

The title refers to the diamonds which are being spirited out of the country by foreign agents to thwart our production, since diamonds are allegedly used in dye-cutting, etc. Detective Michael Shayne is on their trail, however, and after a hectic voyage to Honolulu with a dangerous couturiere, punctuated with shots from a Maxim Silencer, he finally stops the diamond leakage and accompanying murders. It's a lively and good-humored mystery.

THE BUGLE SOUNDS

f—Wallace Beery. Original screen story by Lawrence Kimble and Cyril Hume. Directed by S. Sylvan Simon. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A good service picture about the mechanized cavalry and Wallace Beery playing the part of an old sergeant with small love for tanks. The field shots are remarkably good and the story on which the documentation hangs, if slight, is pleasant enough and has a swell bang-up ending replete with saboteurs and Beery heroics. The star puts over his somewhat sentimental role with his old precision and all told makes the film a very enjoyable one.

THE CORSICAN BROTHERS

ff—Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Akim Tamiroff. Based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. United Artists.

An expensive filming of a very dated kind of story but well acted by the leads and handsomely mounted. The direction has a good deal of unevenness, slowing down every now and then, but it achieves some nicely exciting moments. Chief interest and brilliancy lies in the remarkably clever trick photography when the two brothers are together. The bogus science on which the plot rests is not distressing at all, in fact it's rather fun.

DR. KILDARE'S VICTORY

f—Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Ann Ayars. Based upon characters created by Max Brand. Directed by Major W. S. Van Dyke II. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The victory consists in cutting the red tape that seems to encumber the two hospitals in the town with the necessity of only accepting patients from the zone which is proper to each. Kildare runs afoul of this policy in the case of a young debutante who needed an emergency operation. She appears to be the new romantic interest to come into his life. The people are as pleasant as usual and the film is full of interesting medical items and good performances but its content is rather trivial.

HELLZAPOPPIN'

f—Olsen & Johnson, Martha Raye, Hugh Herbert. Suggested by the stage play by Olsen & Johnson. Directed by H. C. Potter. Universal.

All this and Hellzapoppin', too—it's nerve-racking but entertaining in a volcanic sort of way. Some parts of this frenzied review will displease a few, but there is material to tickle the most eclectic tastes. It makes the old phrase, "covering the gamut," look pale indeed for added to a normal musical are the errors of a ham projectionist, an old western, intrusions of a zoo, an aquacade, Rosebud, the Hays label and the quintessence of discontinuity despite the heavy use of flypaper. A hellzapoppinuva good show.

JOHNNY EAGER

m—Robert Taylor, Lana Turner, Edward Arnold, Van Heflin. Original screen story by James Ed-

ward Grant. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

A synthetic gangster film freighted with an unrelieved grimness and an apparently unending flow of self-sacrifice on the part of almost everyone in the movie in their attempt to save Mr. Taylor's soul. A smart and handsome hoodlum, Johnny has every one well in hand as he engineers his rackets from behind the scenes. And certainly according to his own definition, Johnny is no sucker in the way he deals with friend or foe. That is, not until near the end. The film is way over long and generally slow. Handkerchiefs are useful too because there's a lot of sadness in this picture.

PACIFIC BLACKOUT

f—Robert Preston, Martha O'Driscoll. Original screen story by Franz Spencer and Curt Siodmak. Directed by Ralph Murphy. Paramount.

A convicted murderer, on his way to prison, escapes in a test blackout and has the chance to find out why an unknown night-club singer had testified falsely against him. It seems that his murder would have seriously impaired defense efforts and that fifth columnists might have won a signal victory over American production had the man been convicted. If this sounds over-wrought, be advised that the plot is beautifully devised, the hero thwarted at every turn to create suspense, and the trial blackout and air-raid provide a highly informative demonstration of effective civilian protection.

MR. BUG GOES TO TOWN

ff—Cartoon Feature produced by Max Fleischer. Directed by Dave Fleischer. Paramount.

Like all Technicolor feature cartoons, this one is delightful and should prove a natural for juvenile audiences. It is about a community of assorted bugs living on the last patch of ground left in a busy city. Finally that property is torn up for a skyscraper to be erected and things look black indeed, especially for Hoppity Bug and his girl, Honey Bee. But a pent-house proves the saving of all. It is perhaps a little slow but it has the warmly amusing insect parallels to human life that are found in "The Wind in the Willows." The musical scoring is effective and numerous sub-plots are full of charm.

PARIS CALLING

f—*Elizabeth Bergner, Randolph Scott, Basil Rathbone. Original screen story by John S. Toldy. Directed by Edwin L. Marin. Universal.*

An adventure film with locale in occupied Paris where a French girl who joins the underground movement and a stranded Yankee who flew in the R.A.F. meet, fall in love and finally defeat the Nazi gang who try to destroy them. Frankly propaganda, the film after a slow start picks up momentum and after passages of pathos, heroism and suspense, ends in swift melodrama which if a trifle unlikely is none-the-less thrilling.

RED RIVER VALLEY

ff—*Roy Rogers. Original screen story by Malcolm Stuart Boylan. Directed by Joseph Kane. Republic.*

A nice friendly Western with the time honored fixin's, a dash of romance and some very pleasant singing on the part of the star. Roy, a radio cowboy, comes home to find his town on the verge of bankruptcy because of mysterious accidents on a dam in which the townfolk had sunk most of their money. He tracks down the criminals in spite of much opposition and all ends well.

SOVIET POWER

f—*A documentary composed of five sections. Artkino.*

A very interesting documentation of various phases of the activities going on in the USSR both at war and at peace. The film obviously is composed of five separate pieces strung together to make a single movie. For that reason there is a wide variance in its quality from a technical viewpoint. The loveliest part deals with Armenia, its progress and education under Soviet rule. Two sections entitled *Russia's Millions Mobilize* and *For Freedom, Honor and Country* deal with Russia in the present war. The other two concern the ordering of life in the Soviet, one, *Path of the Future*, outlines the education of the young from birth to adolescence and the other, *The Soviet Woman*, explains and pictures the position of women in the political and economic life of the country. The film has a strong propaganda intent but a large

part of it has beautiful camera work and all possesses material of general interest.

TUXEDO JUNCTION

f—*The Weaver Brothers and Elviry. Original screen story by Dorrell McGowan and Stuart McGowan. Directed by Frank McDonald. Republic.*

An overdrawn caricature of a poor man who befriends transient boys to protect them from a rich neighbor who wants them put in institutions. There is plenty of music in the film and no end of the Weaver wit and kindliness, but the picture could be whittled down to its own advantage.

THE VANISHING VIRGINIAN

f—*Frank Morgan, Kathryn Grayson, Spring Byington. Based on the book by Rebecca Yancey Williams. Directed by Frank Borzage. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.*

A frankly biographical film well played by all the cast, covering the domestic and political career of a Virginian blueblood. Nostalgic and tender, it has the kind of appeal, humorous and touching, that Frank Morgan can project so well. The type of film, episodic and chiefly concerned with character drawing, militates against swiftness of presentation but its leisureliness is rarely draggy.

SELECTED SHORT SUBJECTS

INFORMATIONALS

CALL OF CANADA, THE—f—(Magic Carpet)—A somewhat disconnected but factually interesting view of parts of Canada and its work for war production. 20th Century-Fox.

*CAVALCADE OF AVIATION—f—A compilation of newsreel shots of aviation's history in the making, showing its heroes, its frequent comic interludes with weird new inventions, and its occasional tragedies. Universal.

HEDDA HOPPER'S HOLLYWOOD NO. 2—f—Both at home with William Farnum and in a Hollywood night-spot, Miss Hopper entertains, contrasting the old and the new. Paramount.

HERE IS TOMORROW—f—With well documented information and very little synthetic exaltation, this short film presents the Cooperative movement in operation as a possible blueprint for the future. It describes the factories, buying agencies, research and kitchen testing bureaus, the insurance and the credit bureaus which are all operated as Cooperatives, eliminating the middleman. The advantages of the system are shown as well as the safeguards preventing its exploitation. Resembling advertising, it nevertheless stimulates the audience to make further inquiries about the movement which is perhaps the highest purpose it could strive for. Recommended to schools for instructional use. The Cooperative League of the U.S.A.

KEYS TO ADVENTURE—f—A color short that takes one through the urban and rural sights of the Florida Keys. Universal.

MARCH OF TIME, THE, NO. 5 (Series 8)—f—"Our America at War"—Taken from the film, **The Ramparts We Watch**, this new issue tells of our last unification when we declared war in 1917 and urges harmony for today. Timely but rather heavy flag-waving, too. RKO Radio.

MINNESOTA, LAND OF PLENTY—f—A James A. Fitzpatrick Traveltalk in Technicolor through the fertile state of Minnesota providing interesting views of town and country and unusual historic landmarks. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

PLAYTIME IN HAWAII—f—(Sport Review)—Despite its untimeliness, this short shows some very novel sports events of the natives of Hawaii. 20th Century-Fox.

POPULAR SCIENCE NO. 2—f—The kitchen gadgets will stir the ladies while the men will be held by a complex electronic microscope. Paramount.

QUICK RETURNS—f—(Grantland Rice Sport-light)—The speed and dexterity of modern badminton and table tennis champions interestingly presented. Paramount.

QUIZ KIDS, THE, NO. 2—f—A learned session with the junior geniuses ending with a free-for-all to get three puppies. Paramount.

SITTIN' PRETTY—f—(Grantland Rice Sport-light)—Lessons on the correct way to sit in a saddle for everyone from side-saddlers through jockeys to circus performers. Paramount.

STRANGE FACTS—f—Sea shell ornaments, coconut sculpture and a freak school of shad. Columbia.

UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS NO. 2—f—A group is presented who have strange jobs, the most fascinating is a woman keeper of a zoo, most colorful the man who raises goldfish. Paramount.

WAR CLOUDS IN THE PACIFIC—f—A documentation of Chinese, Dutch, Soviet, British and

U. S. defenses in the Pacific and the threat of Japanese attack. Unfortunately the film is like last fall's newspaper now that war has really come. Some of the sequences are interesting however. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

WE MUST HAVE MUSIC—f—An interesting visit to the part of M-G-M's studio that provides the music we hear in films. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

MUSICALS

COMMUNITY SING NO. 4 (6th Series)—f—A concert of popular songs with Dick Liebert at the organ. Columbia.

RHUMBA RHYTHM, THE—f—Authentic South American flavor is provided by Carlos Molina's band and a troupe of singing and dancing entertainers. Universal.

CARTOONS AND COMEDIES

NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THE—fj—(Color Cartoon)—The Christmas feud of Tom and Jerry, a cat and mouse respectively, that ends on a peaceful and affectionate note worthy of the theme. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

SYMPHONY HOUR—fj—(Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—Pluto had a mishap in bringing the instruments up in an elevator for the Sunday Evening Hour so the orchestra had to improvise on make-shift horns. The results are novel, if not good symphony. RKO Radio.

UNDER THE SPREADING BLACKSMITH SHOP—fj—(Color Cartune)—Andy Panda has very amusing troubles shoeing an old gray costume mare rented from a theatrical agency. Universal.

List of Selected Pictures:

January-December 1941

An alphabetical listing of the pictures selected for recommendation as good entertainment by the Review Committees of the Board from January 1st through December 31st, 1941. This listing, like that for 1939 and 1940, is published in place of the former Annual Catalog of Selected Pictures.

Key to Abbreviations

- f—Family Audience (12 years up).
- m—Mature Audience (18 years up).
- j—Juvenile Audience (Under 12 years).
- *—An above-the-average picture.

Month following picture refers to the Magazine Selected Pictures Guide in which reviewed.

ex—Indicates a review in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of the Magazine.

FEATURES

- m ADAM HAD FOUR SONS—Col.—Mar.
- fj ADVENTURE IN WASHINGTON—Col.—Sept.
- f AFTER "MEIN KAMPF"—Crystal—Feb.
- f *ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY—RKO—Sept., ex.
- f ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT—Warner—Jan. '42
- m AMONG THE LIVING—Para.—Oct.
- f ANDY HARDY'S PRIVATE SECRETARY—Metro—Mar.
- fj APACHE KID, THE—Rep.—Oct.
- m *APPOINTMENT FOR LOVE—Univ.—Nov.
- f BABES ON BROADWAY—Metro—Jan. '42
- m *BACK STREET—Univ.—Feb.
- f BAD MEN OF MISSOURI—Warner—Sept.
- f BADLANDS OF DAKOTA—Univ.—Oct.
- f BAHAMA PASSAGE—Para.—Jan. '42
- f BALL OF FIRE—RKO—Jan. '42
- f BARNACLE BILL—Metro—Sept.
- m BEDTIME STORY—Col. Jan. '42
- f BELLE STARR—20th Cent.—Oct.
- BEYOND THE LAW (see "Sealed Lips")
- f BIG BOSS—Col.—May
- f BIG STORE, THE—Metro—Sept.
- f BILLY THE KID—Metro—Sept.
- f BIRTH OF THE BLUES, THE—Para.—Oct.
- f BLONDE INSPIRATION—Metro—Feb.
- f BLONDIE GOES LATIN—Col.—Mar.
- f BLONDIE IN SOCIETY—Col.—Sept.
- m *BLOOD AND SAND—20th Cent.—Sept.
- f *BLOSSOMS IN THE DUST—Metro—Sept.
- f BLUE, WHITE AND PERFECT—20th Cent.—Jan. '42

- f BLYGE ANTON (Bashful Anton)—Scandia—Sept.
 f BODY DISAPPEARS, THE—Warner—Dec.
 f BOMBAY CLIPPER—Univ.—Oct.
 f BRIDE CAME C.O.D., THE—Warner—Sept.
 f BROADWAY LIMITED—U.A.—Sept.
 f BUCK PRIVATES—Univ.—Feb.
 f *BURMA CONVOY—Univ.—Oct.
 f BUY ME THAT TOWN—Para.—Oct.
 f CADET GIRL—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f CAUGHT IN THE DRAFT—Para.—Sept.
 f *CHARLEY'S AUNT—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f CHARLIE CHAN IN RIO—20th Cent.—Oct.
 f *CHEERS FOR MISS BISHOP—U.A.—Mar.
 f CHOCOLATE SOLDIER, THE—Metro—Nov.
 m *CITIZEN KANE—RKO—May, ex.
 f *COME LIVE WITH ME—Metro—Feb.
 f COME ON DANGER—RKO—Dec.
 f CONFIRM OR DENY—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f CONVOY—RKO—Feb.
 fj CORSICAN BROTHERS, THE—U.A.—Jan. '42
 f COWBOY AND THE BLONDE, THE—20th Cent.—May
 f DANCE HALL—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f DATE WITH THE FALCON, A—RKO—Dec.
 f DEAD MEN'S SHOES—Mono.—Sept.
 f DESERT BANDIT—Rep.—Sept.
 m DESIGN FOR SCANDAL—Metro—Dec.
 f *DEVIL AND MISS JONES, THE—RKO—Apr., ex.
 f DEVIL PAYS OFF, THE—Rep.—Dec.
 f *DIVE BOMBER—Warner—Oct.
 f DOCTORS DON'T TELL—Rep.—Oct.
 m *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE—Metro—Sept.
 f DR. KILDARE'S VICTORY—Metro—Jan. '42
 f DR. KILDARE'S WEDDING DAY—Metro—Oct.
 f DOWN IN SAN DIEGO—Metro—Oct.
 f DOWN MEXICO WAY—Rep.—Nov.
 f DRESSED TO KILL—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj DRIFTIN' KID, THE—Mono.—Nov.
 f DUDE COWBOY—RKO—Oct.
 fj *DUMBO—RKO—Oct., ex.
 f *EN SJOMAN TILL HAST (A Sailor on Horseback)—Scandia—Dec.
 f FATHER TAKES A WIFE—RKO—Oct.
 m *FEMININE TOUCH, THE—Metro—Nov.
 f *FLAME OF NEW ORLEANS—Univ.—May, ex.
 m *FLIGHT FROM DESTINY—Warner—Mar., ex.
 f FLYING CADETS—Univ.—Oct.
 f *FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK—Warner—Mar.
 f *40,000 HORSEMEN—S. S. Krellberg—Nov.
 f *FOUR MOTHERS—Warner—Feb.
 fj *FRANK BUCK'S JUNGLE CAVALCADE—RKO—Sept.
 m FREE AND EASY—Metro—Mar.
 fj FUGITIVE VALLEY—Range Busters—Sept.
 f GANGS OF SONORA—Rep.—Sept.
 f GAY FALCON, THE—RKO—Oct.
 f *GIRL IN THE NEWS, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f GIRL MUST LIVE, A—Univ.—Sept.
 f GLAMOUR BOY—Para.—Oct.
 f GO WEST YOUNG LADY—Col.—Dec.
 f GOLDEN HOOFS—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f GREAT AMERICAN BROADCAST, THE—20th Cent.—May
 f GREAT COMMANDMENT, THE—20th Cent.—May
 f GREAT GUNS—20th Cent.—Oct.
 m *GREAT LIE, THE—Warner—Apr.
 fj GREAT MR. NOBODY, THE—Warner—Mar.
 f GREAT SWINDLE, THE—Col.—Apr.
 f GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, THE—Rep.—Mar.
 fj GUNMAN FROM BODIE, THE—Mono.—Nov.
 m *H. M. PULHAM, ESQ.—Metro—Dec.
 f HANNA I SOCIETEN (Hanna in Society)—Scandia—Dec.
 f HELLZAPOPPIN'—Univ.—Jan. '42
 fj *HENRY ALDRICH FOR PRESIDENT—Para.—Oct.
 f *HERE COMES MR. JORDAN—Col.—Oct., ex.
 f HERR HUSASSISTENTEN (see "Kokskavaljeren")
 m HIGH SIERRA—Warner—Feb., ex.
 m *HOLD BACK THE DAWN—Para.—Sept.
 m HONKY TONK—Metro—Oct.
 f HOT SPOT (see "I Wake Up Screaming")
 f HOUSE OF MYSTERY—Mono.—Sept.
 f *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY—20th Cent. Fox—Nov., ex.
 f HURRICANE SMITH—Rep.—Sept.
 m I WAKE UP SCREAMING—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f *I WANTED WINGS—Para.—Apr.
 f ICE CAPADES—Rep.—Oct.
 f INTERNATIONAL LADY—U. A.—Nov.
 f INTERNATIONAL SQUADRON—Warner—Dec.
 f INVISIBLE WOMAN, THE—Univ.—Feb.
 f *IT STARTED WITH EVE—Univ.—Oct.
 f JAIL HOUSE BLUES—Univ.—Sept.
 m JOHNNY EAGER—Metro—Jan. '42
 f KATHLEEN—Metro—Dec.
 f KEEP 'EM FLYING—Univ.—Dec.
 f KEEPING COMPANY—Metro—Jan.
 f KID FROM KANSAS, THE—Univ.—Oct.
 f KING OF THE WHITE ELEPHANT, THE—Louis Bonomyong—May
 f KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE—Para.—May
 f KNOCKOUT—Warner—Apr.
 f KOKSKAVALJEREN (The Kitchen Cavalier)—Scandia—May
 f *KUKAN—Adventure Films (Herbert Edwards)—Oct.
 m *LADIES IN RETIREMENT—Col.—Oct., ex.
 f LADY BE GOOD—Metro—Oct.
 f *LADY EVE, THE—Para.—Mar., ex.
 f LADY FROM CHEYENNE, THE—Univ.—Apr.
 f LADY FROM LOUISIANA, THE—Rep.—May
 f LADY SCARFACE—RKO—Sept.
 f LAND, THE—U.S. Dept. of Agriculture—Dec., ex.
 fj *LAND OF LIBERTY—Metro—Feb.
 f LANDSTORMENS LILLA LOTTA (The Soldiers' Little Lotta)—Scandia—Apr.
 f LAW OF THE TROPICS—Warner—Oct.
 f LIFE BEGINS FOR ANDY HARDY—Metro—Oct.
 m *LITTLE FOXES, THE—RKO—Sept., ex.
 f LONE RIDER RIDES ON, THE—Pro.—Feb.
 f LONE WOLF TAKES A CHANCE, THE—Col.—Apr.
 f LOUISIANA PURCHASE—Para.—Dec.
 f LOVE CRAZY—Metro—Sept.
 m LYDIA—U.A.—Oct.
 f *MAIL TRAIN—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f MAISIE WAS A LADY—Metro—Feb.
 m *MAJOR BARBARA—U.A.—May, ex.
 m *MALTESE FALCON, THE—Warner—Nov., ex.
 f *MAN HUNT—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f *MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER, THE—Warner—Jan. '42
 m *MARRIED BACHELOR—Metro—Nov.
 f MEDICO OF PAINTED SPRINGS, THE—Col.—Sept.
 f *MEET JOHN DOE—Warner—Apr., ex.
 fj MEET THE CHUMP—Univ.—Feb.
 fj MELODY FOR THREE—RKO—Mar.
 f MEN IN HER LIFE, THE—Col.—Dec.
 f *MEN OF BOYS TOWN—Metro—Apr.
 m MERCY ISLAND—Rep.—Nov.
 f MIDNIGHT ANGEL (see "Pacific Blackout")
 f MILLION DOLLAR BABY—Warner—Sept.
 f MISSING TEN DAYS—Col.—Mar.
 m MODEL WIFE—Univ.—Apr.
 f MOON OVER HER SHOULDER—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f *MOON OVER MIAMI—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f MOONLIGHT IN HAWAII—Univ.—Sept.
 m MR. AND MRS. SMITH—RKO—Feb.
 fj MR. BUG GOES TO TOWN—Para.—Jan. '42
 f MR. CELEBRITY—Pro.—Oct.
 f MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY—Rep.—Apr.
 fj NAVAL ACADEMY—Col.—Sept.
 f NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK—Univ.—Nov.
 f NEW WINE—U.A.—Nov.
 f NEW YORK TOWN—Para.—Sept.
 f NIAGARA FALLS—U.A.—Oct.
 f NICE GIRL?—Univ.—Mar.
 f NIGHT OF JANUARY 16th, THE—Para.—Oct.
 f NINE LIVES ARE NOT ENOUGH—Warner—Oct.
 f NO GREATER SIN—University Film Productions, Inc.—Sept.
 f NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH—Para.—Oct.
 f NURSE'S SECRET, THE—Warner—May
 f OBLIGING YOUNG LADY—RKO—Dec.
 f *ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN—Warner—Nov.
 f ONE NIGHT IN LISBON—Para.—May
 f OUR WIFE—Col.—Oct.
 m OUT OF THE FOG—Warner—Sept.
 f PACIFIC BLACKOUT—Para.—Jan. '42
 f *PARACHUTE BATTALION—RKO—Sept.
 f PARIS CALLING—Univ.—Jan. '42
 f PARSON OF PANAMINT, THE—Para.—Sept.

- f PENALTY, THE—Metro—Mar.
m PENNY SERENADE—Col.—May
f PEOPLE VS. Dr. KILDARE, THE—Metro—May
f PEPE-LE-MOKO—Mayer & Burstyn—Apr., ex.
f PITTSBURGH KID, THE—Rep.—Oct.
m PLAY GIRL—RKO—Jan.
f PLAYMATES—RKO—Dec.
f POISON PEN—Rep.—Sept.
f POT O' GOLD—U.A.—Apr.
f QUIET WEDDING—Univ.—Oct.
m *RAGE IN HEAVEN—Metro—Mar., ex.
f RAWHIDE RANGER—Univ.—Sept.
f REACHING FOR THE SUN—Para.—Mar.
fj RED RIVER VALLEY—Rep.—Jan. '42
fj *RELUCTANT DRAGON, THE—RKO—Sept., ex.
f REMARKABLE MR. KIPPS, THE—20th Cent.—Nov., ex.
f *REMEMBER THE DAY—20th Cent.—Jan. '42
f RIDE KELLY RIDE—20th Cent.—Feb.
f RIDE ON VAQUERO—20th Cent.—Apr.
f RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE—20th Cent.—Oct.
f RIDIN' ON A RAINBOW—Rep.—Feb.
f RINGSIDE MAISIE—Metro—Sept.
f RISE AND SHINE—20th Cent.—Dec.
f ROAD AGENT—Univ.—Dec.
f ROAD SHOW—U.A.—Apr.
f ROAD TO ZANZIBAR—Para.—Mar., ex.
f *RUGGLES OF RED GAP—Para.—Sept.
f SAINT IN PALM SPRINGS, THE—RKO—Jan.
fj SCATTERGOOD BAINES—RKO—Feb.
f SCATTERGOOD PULLS THE STRINGS—RKO—Sept.
f SEA WOLF, THE—Warner—Apr.
f SCOTLAND YARD—20th Cent.—Apr.
f SEALED LIPS—Univ.—Sept.
f *SERGEANT YORK—Warner—Sept., ex.
f SHADOW OF THE THIN MAN—Metro—Nov.
f SHE KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS—Col.—Sept.
f SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS, THE—Para.—Sept.
m *SHINING VICTORY—Warner—Sept., ex.
f SIERRA SUE—Rep.—Dec.
f SIGN OF THE WOLF, THE—Mono.—Apr.
f SINGING HILL, THE—Rep.—May
f SIS HOPKINS—Rep.—May
fj SIX-GUN GOLD—RKO—Sept.
m SKYLARK—Para.—Oct.
f SMALL TOWN DEB—20th Cent.—Nov.
f *SMILIN' THROUGH—Metro—Oct.
m SO ENDS OUR NIGHT—U.A.—Mar.
f SOVIET POWER—Artkino—Jan. '42
f *STARS LOOK DOWN, THE—Metro—Sept., ex.
f *STORY OF THE VATICAN, THE—RKO—Oct.
f STRANGE ALIBI—Warner—May
f *STRAWBERRY BLONDE, THE—Warner—Mar.
f *SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS—Para.—Jan. '42, ex.
f SUN VALLEY SERENADE—20th Cent.—Oct.
f SUNDOWN—U.A.—Nov.
f *SUNNY—RKO—Sept.
f SUNSET IN WYOMING—Rep.—Sept.
m *SUSPICION—RKO—Nov., ex.
f *SWAMP WATER—20th Cent.—Dec., ex.
f *TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME—20th Cent.—Feb.
f *TANKS A MILLION—U.A.—Oct.
f *TARGET FOR TONIGHT—Warner—Dec., ex.
f TARZAN'S SECRET TREASURE—Metro—Dec.
f TEXAS—Col.—Oct.
m *THAT HAMILTON WOMAN—U.A.—Apr., ex.
f THAT NIGHT IN RIO—20th Cent.—Mar.
f *THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING—U.A.—Mar.
f THEY DARE NOT LOVE—Col.—May
f THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON—Warner—Dec.
f THEY MEET AGAIN—RKO—Sept.
f THEY MET IN BOMBAY—Metro—Sept.
f *THEY MET ON SKIS—C.L.M. Import Corp.—May
f THIEVES FALL OUT—Warner—May
m *THIS THING CALLED LOVE—Col.—Feb.
f THIS WOMAN IS MINE—Univ.—Oct.
f 3 SONS O' GUNS—Warner—Sept.
f TIGHT SHOES—Univ.—Sept.
m *TOBACCO ROAD—20th Cent.—Mar.
f *TOM, DICK AND HARRY—RKO—Sept., ex.
f TOPPER RETURNS—U.A.—Apr.
f TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN, THE—Metro—Mar.
f TUMBLE-DOWN RANCH IN ARIZONA—Range Busters—May
f TUXEDO JUNCTION—Rep.—Jan. '42
m *TWO-FACED WOMAN—Metro—Dec., ex.
f TWO LATIN FROM MANHATTAN—Col.—Oct.
fj UNDER FIESTA STARS—Rep. Oct.
f *UNDERGROUND—Warner—Sept.
f UNEXPECTED UNCLE—RKO—Oct.
f UNFINISHED BUSINESS—Univ.—Oct.
f UNHOLY PARTNERS—Metro—Nov.
m *UNIVERSITY OF LIFE—Artkino—May
f VANISHING VIRGINIAN, THE—Metro—Jan. '42
f VI PA SOLGLANTAN (We and Our Little Farm)—Scandia—Feb.
f VIE TVA (We Two)—Scandia—Feb.
f *VIRGINIA—Para.—Feb.
f *VOICE IN THE NIGHT, A—Col.—Sept.
f WAGONS ROLL AT NIGHT, THE—Warner—May
f WE GO FAST—20th Cent.—Oct.
m WEEK-END FOR THREE—RKO—Nov.
f WEEK-END IN HAVANA—20th Cent.—Oct.
f *WESTERN UNION—20th Cent.—Feb.
m WHEN LADIES MEET—Metro—Oct.
f WHISTLING IN THE DARK—Metro—Oct.
f WILD GEESE CALLING—20th Cent.—Sept.
f WILD MAN OF BORNEO, THE—Metro—Feb.
m *WOMAN'S FACE, A—Metro—May
f WORLD PREMIERE—Para.—Oct.
f YANK IN THE R.A.F., A—20th Cent.—Oct.
f *YOU'LL NEVER GET RICH—Col.—Oct.
f ZIEGFELD GIRL—Metro—May

INFORMATIONALS

- f ABROAD AT HOME—Col.—May
f ALASKA TOUR—Col.—Dec.
fj *ALIVE IN THE DEEP—Woodard Prods. Co.—Mar.
f ALLURING ALASKA—Metro—Mar.
f ALUMINUM—U. S. Office of Emergency Management—Oct.
f AMERICAN SPOKEN HERE—Metro—Jan.
f ANNAPOLIS SALUTES THE NAVY—Univ.—Dec.
f AQUAPLAY—Col.—Sept.
f ARCTIC SPRING TIME—20th Cent.—May
f *ARISTOCRATS OF THE KENNEL—20th Cent.—Oct.
fj ARMY CHAMPIONS—Metro—Nov.
f AT THE STROKE OF TWELVE—Vita.—Dec.
fj BABY SEAL, THE—20th Cent.—Apr.
f BATTLE, THE—Metro—Sept.
f BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, THE—20th Cent.—May
f BEAUTIFUL ONTARIO—Col.—Sept.
f BEAUTY AND THE BEACH—Para.—Oct.
f BIG BILL TILDEN—Vita.—Sept.
f BOMBER—U. S. Motion Picture Committee—Oct.
f BUENOS AIRES TODAY—Col.—Nov.
f *CABALLERO COLLEGE—RKO—Mar.
f CALL OF CANADA, THE—20th Cent.—Jan. '42
f *CAVALCADE OF AVIATION—Univ.—Jan. '42
f CANINE SKETCHES—Para.—Mar.
fj CAPITAL SIDELIGHTS—Col.—Sept.
f CHANGED IDENTITY—Metro—Dec.
m COFFINS ON WHEELS—Metro—Sept.
f DELHI—Para.—Mar.
f DIARY OF A RACING PIGEON, THE—Vita.—Feb.
f DOG OBEDIENCE—RKO—Nov.
f EMPIRE IN EXILE—20th Cent.—Sept.
fj EXPLORING SPACE—Col.—Oct.
f FANCY ANSWERS—Metro—Dec.
f FEATHERS—Col.—Apr.
f FIGHTER PILOT—Col.—Sept.
f *FORBIDDEN PASSAGE—Metro—Mar.
f FROM SINGAPORE TO HONG KONG—Col.—Mar.
f GALLUP POLL, THE—Col.—Nov.
f GARDEN SPOT OF THE EARTH—Univ.—Sept.
f GEORGE WASHINGTON, COUNTRY GENTLEMAN—Univ.—Oct.
f GEORGETOWN, "PRIDE OF PENANG"—Metro—Dec.
f GHOST TREASURE—Metro—Oct.
fj GLACIER TRAILS—20th Cent.—Oct.
f GLIMPSES OF FLORIDA—Metro—Oct.
f GLIMPSES OF KENTUCKY—Metro—Apr.

- f GLIMPSES OF WASHINGTON STATE—Metro—May
 f GOING PLACES NO. 87-92—Univ.—Mar.—Sept.
 fj GREAT MEDDLER, THE—Metro—Feb.
 f *GUARDIANS OF THE WILDS—Para.—Oct.
 f HAITI, LAND OF DARK MAJESTY—Metro—Sept.
 f HANDS OF DESTINY—Para.—Sept.
 f HARVESTS FOR TOMORROW—U. S. Dept. of Agriculture—Sept.
 f HEDDA HOPPER'S HOLLYWOOD NO. 2—Para.—Jan. '42
 f HERE COMES THE CAVALRY—Vita.—Oct.
 f HERE IS TOMORROW—The Cooperative League of U.S.A.—Jan. '42
 f HIGHWAY OF FRIENDSHIP—20th Cent.—Nov.
 f HOBBIES—Metro—Nov.
 fj HOOLA BOOLA—Para.—Sept.
 fj HOW GOES CHILE—RKO—Sept.
 f HOW WAR CAME—Col.—Dec.
 f HUNTING THE HARD WAY—Vita.—Oct.
 f INDIAN DURBAR—Para.—May
 f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 6-13—RKO—Feb.—Oct.
 f INFORMATION PLEASE NO. 1-2—RKO—Oct.—Nov.
 f INTERNATIONAL FORUM NO. 1-3—Col.—May—Nov.
 f INSIDE PASSAGE—Metro—Oct.
 f ISLANDS OF THE WEST INDIES—Col.—Feb.
 f JOURNEY IN TUNISIA—Col.—Oct.
 fj *JUNGLE—Para.—Sept.
 f KEYS TO ADVENTURE—Univ.—Jan. '42
 f KINGS OF THE TURF—Vita.—Dec.
 f LETTER FROM CAIRO, A—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f LIONS ON THE LOOSE—Metro—Sept.
 f MAN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD, THE—Metro—Sept.
 f MARCH ON MARINES—Vita.—Feb.
 f MARCH OF TIME, THE, 7th series, Nos. 5-13; 8th series, Nos. 1-5—RKO—Feb.—Jan. '42
 f MEDITERRANEAN PORTS OF CALL—Metro—Feb.
 f MEET THE FLEET—Vita.—Mar.
 f MEET THE STARS Nos. 2, 5-8—Rep.—Feb.—Sept.
 fj MEN AND SHIPS—U. S. Maritime Commission—Mar.
 f *MEN OF LIGHTSHIP "61"—20th Cent.—Apr.
 f MEXICAN JUMPING BEANS—Vita.—Feb.
 f MINNESOTA, LAND OF PLENTY—Metro—Jan. '42
 f MIRACLE OF HYDRO, THE—20th Cent.—Apr.
 f MOBY DICK'S HOME TOWN—Univ.—Sept.
 f MODERN HIGHWAY, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f MORE ABOUT NOSTRADAMUS—Metro—Feb.
 f *MORE TRIFLES OF IMPORTANCE—Metro—Apr.
 f NEW YORK PARADE No. 1—Col.—Mar.
 f NICE WORK IF YOU CAN DO IT—Col.—Feb.
 f NORTHERN NEIGHBORS—Univ.—Oct.
 f *OF PUPS AND PUZZLES—Metro—Oct.
 f OLD AND NEW ARIZONA—Col.—Feb.
 fj *OLD NEW ORLEANS—Metro—Feb.
 fj 1-2-3, GO—Metro—May
 f OUT OF DARKNESS—Metro—May
 f PAMPAS PADDOCK—RKO—Oct.
 f PEACEFUL QUEBEC AT WAR—Univ.—Dec.
 f *PERILS OF THE JUNGLE—Vita.—Dec.
 f PICTURE PEOPLE No. 5—RKO—Feb.
 f PICTURE PEOPLE, Nos. 1-3—RKO—Oct.—Dec.
 f POPULAR SCIENCE, Nos. 3-6—Para.—Feb.—Sept.
 f POPULAR SCIENCE No. 2—Para.—Jan. '42
 fj POWER FOR DEFENSE—Natl. Defense Advisory Commission—Mar.
 f QUIZ BIZ, WHAT'S YOUR I.Q. No. 4—Metro—Mar.
 f QUIZ KIDS, THE, Nos. 1-2—Para.—Oct.—Jan. '42
 fj RED, WHITE AND BLUE HAWAII—Para.—Mar.
 f REDMEN ON PARADE—Metro—Feb.
 f RESPECT THE LAW—Metro—Feb.
 f ROAD TO INDIA, A—Para.—Nov.
 f SACRED GANGES, THE—Para.—Feb.
 f SAGEBRUSH AND SILVER—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f SAN FRANCISCO—Col.—May
 f SCENIC GRANDEUR—Metro—Dec.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS, Nos. 1-3, 6, 9—Col.—Feb.—Sept.
 f SCREEN SNAPSHOTS, Nos. 2-3—Col.—Oct.—Nov.
 f SEA FOR YOURSELF—Metro—Feb.
 f SENTINELS OF THE CARIBBEAN—20th Cent.—Mar.
 f SEEING EYE, THE—Vita.—Sept.
 f SHARK HUNTING—Vita.—Feb.
 f SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC—Col.—Sept.
 f SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC No. 1—Col.—Oct.
 f SOJOURN IN HAVANA—Col.—Feb.
 f SOLDIERS OF THE SKY—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f STRANGE FACTS—Col.—Jan. '42
 f STRANGE TESTAMENT—Metro—Dec.
 f STRANGER THAN FICTION, Nos. 87-99—Univ.—Mar.—Dec.
 f SUCKER LIST—Metro—Oct.
 fj SWING CLEANING—Para.—May
 fj SYMPHONY HOUR—RKO—Jan. '42
 f TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT No. 3—Col.—Mar.
 f TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT—Col.—Sept.
 f TAKE THE AIR—Vita.—Mar.
 f TANKS ARE COMING—Vita.—Dec.
 m TELL TALE HEART, THE—Metro—Nov.
 f THIS IS ENGLAND—Col.—May
 f THIS IS THE BOWERY—Metro—Sept.
 f TRAIL OF THE BUCCANEERS, THE—Univ.—Oct.
 fj TRAINING POLICE HORSES—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f TRIUMPH WITHOUT DRUMS—Metro—Nov.
 fj TVA—Tennessee Valley Authority—Mar.
 f UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, WEST POINT, THE—Col.—Feb.
 f UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY, THE—Col.—Mar.
 f UNUSUAL CRAFTS—Col.—Feb.
 f UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS Nos. 3-6; new series Nos. 1-2—Para.—Mar.—Jan. '42
 f VILLAGE IN INDIA, A—Para.—Mar.
 f VIVA MEXICO!—Metro—Dec.
 f WAR CLOUDS IN THE PACIFIC—Metro—Jan. '42
 f WASHINGTON PARADE No. 4—Col.—May
 f WHISPERS—Metro—Mar.
 f WHITE SAILS—Vita.—Dec.
 f WILD BOAR HUNT—Vita.—Apr.
 fj *WILLY AND THE MOUSE—Metro—May
 f WINGS OF STEEL—Vita.—Sept.
 f WINTER IN ESKIMO LAND—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY—Col.—Dec.
 f *WONDERS OF THE SEA—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f WORLD OF SOUND, THE—Col.—Oct.
 f YOSEMITE, THE MAGNIFICENT—Metro—May
 f YOU CAN'T FOOL A CAMERA—Metro—May
 f YOU, THE PEOPLE—Metro—Jan.
 f YOUR LAST ACT—Metro—Sept.

MUSICALS

- m *CARNIVAL OF RHYTHM—Vita.—Oct.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 4 (5th series)—Col.—Feb.
 f COMMUNITY SING No. 4 (6th series)—Col.—Jan. '42
 f CUBAN RHYTHM—Metro—Sept.
 f DOIN' THE TOWN—Univ.—Nov.
 f FORTY BOYS AND A SONG—Vita.—Dec.
 f FREDDY MARTIN AND ORCHESTRA—Vita.—Apr.
 f HENRY BUSSE AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Vita.—Feb.
 f IN THE GROOVE—Univ.—Oct.
 f MINSTREL DAYS—Vita.—Dec.
 f MUSIC A LA KING—Univ.—Sept.
 f MUSIC IN THE MORGAN MANNER—Univ.—Mar.
 f ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME—Univ.—Sept.
 f RHUMBA RHYTHM, THE—Univ.—Jan. '42
 f SHADOWS IN SWING—Univ.—May
 f SKINNAY ENNIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA—Vita.—Feb.
 f SKYLINE SERENADE—Univ.—Nov.
 f THOSE GOOD OLD DAYS—Vita.—Oct.
 f UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BAND—Vita.—Dec.
 f WE MUST HAVE MUSIC—Metro—Jan. '42

SPORTS

- f ACROBATIC ACES—Para.—Mar.
 f CALIFORNIA THOROUGHBREDS — Vita. — Feb.
 f CRAIG WOOD—RKO—Sept.
 f CRYSTAL FLYERS—RKO—Dec.
 f DIVING THRILLS—Col.—Sept.
 f FIGHT, FISH, FIGHT—Vita.—Mar.
 f FOOTBALL THRILLS, 1940—Metro—Nov.
 fj FUN ON ROLLERS—20th Cent.—Sept.
 f GAUCHO SPORT—RKO—Dec.
 f IT HAPPENS ON ROLLERS—Vita.—Oct.
 f JOCKEY'S DAY—RKO—Sept.
 f JUNGLE ARCHER—Col.—May
 f JUNGLE FISHING—Col.—Oct.
 f LASSO WIZARDS—Para.—Sept.
 f *LIFE OF A THOROUGHBRED—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f LIONS FOR SALE—Vita.—Oct.
 f MARINE ROUND-UP—Para.—Jan.
 f MAT MEN—RKO—Feb.
 f MEET THE CHAMPS—Para.—Oct.
 f ON THE SPOT—Para.—May
 f PLAYING WITH NEPTUNE—20th Cent.—Apr.
 f PLAYTIME IN HAWAII—20th Cent.—Jan. '42
 f POLO CHAMPIONS—Col.—Dec.
 f QUICK RETURNS—Para.—Jan. '42
 f RODEO GOES TO TOWN, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f ROLLING RHYTHM—RKO—Sept.
 f SAIL HO!—Vita.—Sept.
 f SHOOTING MERMAIDS—Para.—Oct.
 f SITTING PRETTY—Para.—Jan. '42
 f SKY SAILING—Vita.—Sept.
 f SNOW DOGS—Para.—Sept.
 f SHOW DOGS—Col.—Oct.
 f SPLITS, SPARES AND STRIKES—Col.—Mar.
 f STEEDS AND STEERS—RKO—Sept.
 f SWORD SOLDIERS—RKO—May
 f SYMPHONY IN SNOW—20th Cent.—Apr.
 f TEE UP—Col.—Sept.
 f WATER BUGS—Metro—Oct.
 f WATER SPORTS—Vita.—Dec.
 f WHAT'S LACROSSE—Para.—Oct.

SERIALS

- f RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY Nos. 3-15—Univ.—Feb. Apr.
 f SKY RAIDERS Nos. 1-12—Univ.—Feb. Apr.
 fj TOY TROUBLE—Vita.—Sept.
 fj TRIAL OF MR. WOLF—Vita.—Sept.
 fj TRUANT OFFICER DONALD—RKO—Sept.
 f TWO FOR THE ZOO—Para.—Mar.
 fj UNCLE JOEY—20th Cent.—May
 fj UNCLE JOEY COMES TO TOWN—20th Cent.—Oct.
 fj UNDER THE SPREADING BLACKSMITH SHOP—Univ.—Jan. '42
 fj VILLAGE SMITHY, THE—RKO—Nov.
 f WACKY WILDLIFE—Vita.—Feb.
 fj WACKY WORM, THE—Vita.—Oct.
 fj WE, THE ANIMALS SQUEAK—Vita.—Oct.
 fj WELCOME LITTLE STRANGER—20th Cent.—Oct.
 f WESTERN DAZE—Para.—Feb.
 fj WHAT HAPPENS AT NIGHT—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj WHAT'S COOKIN'—Univ.—Nov.
 fj WHEN KNIGHTS WERE BOLD—20th Cent.—Apr.
 fj WHO'S ZOO IN HOLLYWOOD—Col.—Dec.
 fj WILD OYSTERS—Para.—Mar.
 fj WOODY WOODPECKER—Univ.—Sept.
 fj YARN ABOUT YARNS, A—20th Cent.—Dec.

COMEDIES AND NOVELTIES

- f ALI, THE GIANT KILLER—Col.—Feb.
 f ALICE IN MOVIELAND—Vita.—Feb.
 f BREEZY LITTLE BEARS—Para.—Feb.
 f COME BACK MISS PIPPS—Metro—Nov.
 f CRIME CONTROL—Para.—Apr.
 f DOG IN THE ORCHARD—Vita.—Feb.
 f FLICKER MEMORIES—Metro—Nov.

- f FORGOTTEN MAN, THE—Para.—May
 f GENERAL NUISANCE—Col.—Oct.
 f HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH—Metro—Feb.
 f HAPPY FACES—Vita.—Oct.
 f HELPING HANDS—Metro—Oct.
 f HOW TO TAKE A VACATION—Para.—Nov.
 f LOVE'S INTRIGUE—Vita.—Feb.
 f MISSISSIPPI SWING—20th Cent.—Feb.
 f PENNY TO THE RESCUE—Metro—Feb.
 f READY, WILLING BUT UNABLE—Col.—May
 m WAITING FOR BABY—Para.—Feb.
 f WEDDING BILLS—Metro—Jan.

CARTOONS

- fj ABDUL THE BULBUL-AMEER—Metro—Mar.
 fj ALL THIS AND RABBIT STEW—Vita.—Dec.
 fj ALLEY CAT, THE—Metro—Sept.
 fj ART OF SELF DEFENSE, THE—RKO—Oct.
 fj BAGGAGE BUSTERS—RKO—Mar.
 f BEDTIME FOR SNIFFLES—Vita.—Feb.
 fj BIRD TOWER, THE—20th Cent.—Dec.
 fj BRAVE LITTLE BAT, THE—Vita.—Dec.
 fj BRINGING HOME THE BACON—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj CAT'S TALE, THE—Vita.—Mar.
 fj CHEF DONALD—RKO—Oct.
 fj CHILD PSYKOLOJIKY—Para.—Sept.
 fj COY DECOY—Vita.—Oct.
 fj CRACKPOT QUAIL—Vita.—Mar.
 fj CUCKOO I.Q.—Col.—Sept.
 fj DANCE OF THE WEED—Metro—Sept.
 fj DIPSY GYPSY—Para.—Apr.
 fj DIZZY KITTY—Univ.—May
 fj DOG'S DREAM, THE—20th Cent.—May
 fj DONALD'S CAMERA—RKO—Oct.
 fj DUMB LIKE A FOX—Col.—Sept.
 fj EARLY TO BED—RKO—Sept.
 fj FARM FROLICS—Vita.—Oct.
 fj FLYING BEAR—Metro—Dec.
 fj FOX AND THE GRAPES, THE—Col.—Dec.
 fj GENTLEMEN'S GENTLEMAN—RKO—Feb.
 fj GOLDEN EGGS—RKO—Feb.
 f GOOFY GROCERIES—Vita.—Apr.
 fj HIAWATHA'S RABBIT HUNT—Vita.—Oct.
 fj HOLLYWOOD STEPS OUT—Vita.—Oct.
 fj HORSE FLY OPERA—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj ICE CARNIVAL, THE—20th Cent.—Oct.
 fj I'LL NEVER CROW AGAIN—Para.—Oct.
 fj INKI AND THE LION—Vita.—Oct.
 fj *JOE GLOW, THE FIREFLY—Vita.—Apr.
 fj LEND A PAW—RKO—Oct.
 fj *LITTLE CESARIO—Metro—Oct.
 fj LITTLE MOLE, THE—Metro—May
 f LONESOME STRANGER—Metro—Jan.
 fj MAN'S BEST FRIEND—Univ.—Oct.
 fj MIDNIGHT SNACK, THE—Metro—Sept.
 f MOUSE TRAPPERS—Univ.—Feb.
 f MRS. LADYBUG—Metro—Feb.
 fj NIFTY NINETIES—RKO—Sept.
 fj OLD MacDonald DUCK—RKO—Sept.
 fj OLD OAKEN BUCKET, THE—20th Cent.—Sept.
 fj OLIVE'S SWEETSTAKE TICKET—Para.—Mar.
 fj ONE MAN NAVY—20th Cent.—Oct.
 fj ORPHAN'S BENEFIT—RKO—Sept.
 fj PLUTO JUNIOR—RKO—Dec.
 fj *PLUTO'S PLAYMATES—RKO—Feb.
 f POPEYE PRESENTS EUGENE, THE JEEP—Para.—Jan.
 f PORKY'S HIRED HAND—Vita.—Feb.
 fj PORKY'S MIDNIGHT MATINEE—Vita.—Dec.
 fj PORKY'S PRIZE PONY—Vita.—Oct.
 f PROBLEM PAPPY—Para.—Feb.
 fj PROSPECTING BEAR—Metro—Mar.
 f RAGGEDY ANN AND RAGGEDY ANDY—Para.—Feb.
 fj ROOKIE BEAR—Metro—Sept.
 fj SADDLE SILLY—Vita.—Dec.
 fj SLAP HAPPY HUNTERS—20th Cent.—Dec.
 f SNOW MAN, THE—20th Cent.—Feb.
 fj SNOWTIME FOR COMEDY—Vita.—Dec.
 f SOUR PUSS, THE—Vita.—Feb.
 f SPEAKING OF ANIMALS—DOWN ON THE FARM—Para.—May
 fj SUPERMAN—Para.—Oct.
 f TEMPERAMENTAL LION—20th Cent.—Feb.
 fj TORTOISE BEATS THE HARE—Vita.—Apr.

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